

Evil, awesome, thrilling

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page 44

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page 22

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page 46

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Top independent school abandons new-look A levels

By JOHN O'LEARY
EDUCATION EDITOR

ONE of Britain's leading independent schools has told parents that it intends to abandon A levels, just two days before the Government announces a controversial reform of the sixth-form curriculum.

Sevenoaks School in Kent, the top co-educational school in last year's Times examination tables, is to offer only the International Baccalaureate (IB) to new entrants from next year. Tommy Cookson, the Headmaster, said the qualification had proved to be a better "yardstick of excellence" than A levels.

Sevenoaks's decision will be an embarrassment for ministers at a

time when their A-level reforms are certain to face criticism from left and right. Baroness Blackstone, the Education Minister, is to confirm tomorrow plans to offer five subjects in the sixth form, and new courses in the "key skills" of information technology, numeracy and communication.

The package will clear the way for the spread of modular A levels — which examine students at up to six stages during their course — while guaranteeing a traditionally-examined alternative in all subjects.

Traditionalists believe that the changes will sacrifice depth for breadth of study, while the progressive lobby argues that the changes do too little to encourage students to

mix arts and sciences, or academic and vocational subjects.

The IB, which Sevenoaks has offered as an alternative to A levels since 1977, requires candidates to take six subjects from different areas of the curriculum, three of which are pursued to Higher Level. Students also take a course on the theory of knowledge, are separately assessed on creativity, action and service, and have to write a 4,000-word extended essay.

Designed in the 1960s as an international qualification, the IB is now taken by 35,000 students a year in 100 countries. But its expansion has been limited in Britain, partly because of parents' perceived preference for A levels and the cost of offering

more than one type of academic qualification.

Sevenoaks decided to drop A levels when, for the first time, those taking the IB represented a majority of the sixth-form. Mr Cookson said: "After 20 years of running IB courses in parallel with A level, we now have decided to opt for what we consider the better alternative. With the future shape of A levels under review, we have chosen to adhere to a known yardstick of excellence."

Pupils already at the school, where boarding fees are £14,000 a year, will continue to be offered A level. But Graham Lacey, the head of sixth-form, said the courses could be phased out before 2005 if demand dried up as expected.

In a letter to parents, Mr Cookson said that earlier fears that the IB would be unacceptable to medical schools and leading universities had been overcome. Of the school's 40 places at Oxford and Cambridge last year, 24 went to IB candidates.

The school believes that the IB differentiates more clearly between the many sixth-formers who would achieve three top-grade A levels. In the past ten years, only two IB candidates have achieved the maximum 45 points.

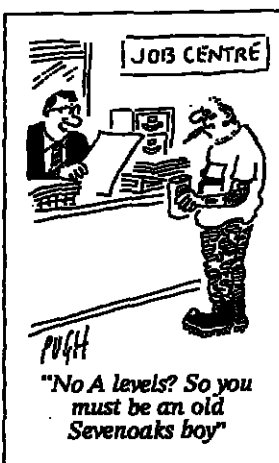
Other independent schools are also worried by the direction of A-level reforms. James Sabben-Clare, the Headmaster of Winchester College, has already said that his school might consider switching to the IB if

the changes prove unsatisfactory.

Mr Sabben-Clare, the chairman of the Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference which represents the leading 230 independent schools, was worried that continued grade inflation at A level would devalue the results of high achievers.

And Professor Alan Smithers, the head of Liverpool University's Centre for Education and Employment Research, said that other selective schools might follow suit. "I think the Government was wise to be cautious in its reform, but it is good for schools to have another option. It helps to keep all qualifications up to the mark."

Ministers take cover, page 4



Blair opposes pay-offs for eurocrats

By PHILIP WEBSTER AND CHARLES BREMNER

NO European Commissioner found guilty of fraud or misconduct should receive a pay-off, Tony Blair and William Hague agreed yesterday.

Outgoing Commissioners could receive payouts worth as much as £300,000, but the Tory leader said that the money should not go to those "forced to resign in disgrace".

And the Prime Minister told MPs: "In respect of the pay-offs, of course, if someone is guilty of fraud or misconduct, those will not apply."

The Government also welcomed Jacques Santer's decision to abandon his fight to stay in office. In a statement, the 20 Commissioners said: "We have resigned and have no desire or intention of remaining in office a moment longer than we have to."

It called for the appointment of a new executive "without delay" and said it would carry on running basic EU business until then.

Mr Blair, who spoke to several EU leaders yesterday about the appointment of Mr Santer's successor, wants the choice to be made as swiftly as possible. There is certain to be lengthy discussion at next week's Berlin summit and the appointment could come at an informal gathering of EU leaders soon afterwards.

But two of the rumoured candidates yesterday ruled themselves out. Antonio Guterres, the Portuguese Prime Minister, who is said to be backed by Mr Blair, said he was "totally unavailable".

Wim Kok, the Dutch Prime Minister, said he did not want the job and favoured a southern candidate.

This strengthened speculation over Romano Prodi, the former Italian Prime Minister. Javier Solana, the Spanish chief of Nato, said he was too busy to think about an EU job.

Mr Blair was also forced to deflect a combined and unprecedented call from Tony Benn and John Major for the appointment of British Commissioners to be approved by Parliament.

Mr Hague took up the case in Question Time, suggesting that this was an appropriate time to change existing procedures and allow the Commons a say. But Mr Blair said that the existing system was the best.

In yesterday's confusion over how to replace the EU executive, several Commissioners made clear that they expected to stay on in a new interim administration, possibly as President.

A potential in-house saviour emerged in the shape of Karel van Miert, the Belgian Commissioner, who appeared to put himself forward as a candidate when he replaced Mr Santer as chief damage controller for the Commissioners.

Mr van Miert, a widely respected figure, joined a chorus of Commissioners airing their anger over being forced to carry a collective can for the failures of Mr Santer and Edith Cresson, the French Commissioner.

"The great majority of my colleagues were convinced that Cresson should have been the subject for debate, and not the resignation of all of us," he said.

The Liberal group, the third force in the EU Parliament, called last night for Sir Leon Brittan, the British Commission vice-president, to be given the post of caretaker president immediately. His mandate should be "to clean up the toilet" of the EU executive, according to Bo Jensen, the Liberal secretary-general.

While London pressed for emergency action, Bonn, Paris and other capitals made clear the complex procedure for putting in place even an interim team could take weeks.

A consensus seems to have emerged among the EU governments on the need for a fully empowered interim Commission, which would hold office until January, when a new team is due to start a five-year term. The thinking is that the president of this Commission could then carry on in office, along with much of the outgoing team.

Meanwhile, the chaos in Brussels deepened with the start of a strike by staff at the Council of Ministers over what they see as the crooked way in which national civil servants are being given posts in the EU bureaucracy.

EU in crisis, pages 15-17
Anatole Kaletsky, page 24
Diary, page 24
Leading article, page 25



The Queen Mother discussing the chances of her horse Easter Ross with the jockey Mick Fitzgerald at Cheltenham yesterday. He fell at the second fence. Earlier, Fitzgerald won the Queen Mother Champion Chase on Call Equine. Reports, pages 52, 53

Private hospital inquiry to curb health scandals

By JILL SHERMAN, CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

MEDICAL standards in Britain's 300 private hospitals are to be investigated and monitored for the first time under a Government proposal to stop health scandals.

Frank Dobson, the Health Secretary, is planning to set up an independent inspectorate to regulate private hospitals and publish league tables comparing medical performance and death rates.

The public would be able to compare private hospitals against NHS hospitals to discover the best and worst treatment. They may also get access to information about individual doctors who work both in the NHS and the private sector.

The health department will shortly publish a consultation paper with options for regulating care in the independent sector, with legislation expected next year.

The move follows medical scandals in both the NHS and the private sector. Last September Robert Ledward, a gynaecologist, was struck off the

medical register after being accused of injuring 400 women under his care in both private and NHS hospitals in a separate case. Hadassa Carmoon was given the all clear three times by BUPA breast screening at Gatwick Park in 1992, but later developed cancer. She won £143,000 in an out-of-court settlement. The case is being considered by the all-party Commons Health Committee which is taking evidence on whether independent health care should be regulated.

About 800,000 operations are performed annually in private hospitals and more than 17,000 doctors do some private work. As many as 25 per cent of routine waiting list operations such as hip and knee replacements are performed privately.

Twelve million people either have private health insurance or pay for treatment in private hospitals, but there is no regulation of medical standards.

Under the 1984 Act covering nursing homes, health authorities

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Dunblane policewomen seek £800,000 damages

By SHIRLEY ENGLISH

TWO policewomen who claim they suffered psychological trauma after the Dunblane massacre are suing their force for £400,000 each.

The women allege that they were denied adequate counselling after the shootings four years ago when 16 primary schoolchildren and their teacher died. Writs were served last week on Chief Constable William Wilson of Central Scotland Police and the claims will be lodged with the Court of Session in Edinburgh.

But families of the children who died, community leaders and police reacted with anger to the claims, which far exceed the compensation paid to relatives of the victims. John MacLaren, whose five-year-old granddaughter Megan Turner was killed by Thomas Hamilton, said: "These officers were just doing their job. I would imagine that for anyone who was in the gym it

would have been just awful, a horrendous experience, but what about the rest of us? I lost my granddaughter. You just have to get on with your life."

Charlie Clydesdale, 42, who lost his daughter Victoria and had to identify her body yet has been denied compensation by the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, said: "How can they justify this? I lost a child. I had to identify my own wee girl just after it happened. So if I cannot get compensation for the things I have suffered, how on earth can two police officers who stood outside the school gates have the right to ask for nearly half a million pounds?"

Ian Watson, a solicitor for the policewomen, aged 26 and 30, said that both had played a "significant role" in policing the tragedy, arriving at the school almost immediately after the killings. One was posted at the school gates to deal

with frantic parents and both were later sent to the gymnasium where the dead and injured were being identified.

It is understood that afterwards they were given an hour of counselling and sent back to work. One has retired on medical grounds and the other is on sick leave.

Central Scotland Police declined to comment on the writs, but a number of officers privately condemned the claims, saying they had agreed not to seek damages in view of the far greater trauma suffered by relatives.

The controversy echoes that surrounding the Hillsborough disaster, which saw 14 South Yorkshire policemen awarded £1.2 million for psychiatric damage. Five law lords later blocked payments to other officers, saying it was unfair for them to receive compensation when some of the bereaved received nothing.

Weary balloonists heading home

By HELEN RUMBELOW

THE British and Swiss pilots who are the closest in history to flying around the world in a balloon are racing towards the finish line with dwindling fuel and heat.

Brian Jones, 51, was said to be mentally and physically exhausted as the *Breitling Orbiter 3* flew over Belize last night, in its 17th day and completing its 20,000th mile.

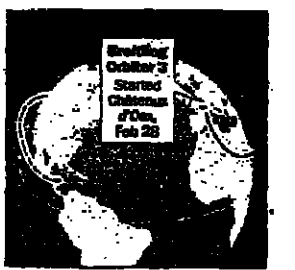
He and Bertrand Piccard, 41, must cross the same longitude twice to win the \$1 million prize offered by Anheuser-Busch, the makers of Budweiser beer. But of far greater importance is achieving the last

great aviation challenge. On current weather predictions they hope to reach this latitude, 9.27 degrees west, somewhere over north-west Africa at around 6pm on Saturday.

After breaking the long-distance record on Monday, the pair had to waste precious propane to dodge clouds over Mexico. Now they are finding it difficult to keep their spirits up after the disappointment of hitting slow wind yesterday.

Today they plan to cruise at 34,000ft over Jamaica, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic, before their last great hurdle, the Atlantic, on Friday. They aim to hit a fast jet stream that will speed them along at 85mph, but they cannot afford any deviation or bad weather.

Both have colds, neither is sleeping or eating well, and yesterday one of the balloon's hesters broke down. They were trying to "hang tough" for the next three days, said Mr Jones's wife, Joanna, at the control centre in Geneva.



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Blair gets twisters in a nick as Prescott adopts sign language

Blony Tair must be under pressure. In the House of Commons the strain showed: the Prime Minister stumbled into a series of verbal slips. I blame Europe.

At first we thought he had lapsed into Latin. Answering the first question (from a Tory about the Budget) an animated Mr Blair insisted there had been "nem cat tucks".

Amid a general scratching of heads, he took another run. "Net tax cuts," Blair explained.

Some of us preferred the first version. A Budget with cat tucks sounds fun. The PM's speechwriters made a mental note: avoid fast buck or fiscal luck in the future texts.

Blair was recovering from this tumble when he slipped again. Asked about the murder in Northern Ireland of Rosemary Nelson, the Prime Minister declared that no effort would be spared in the hunt for her... and he stopped just short of kullers, and got back on track: hunt for the kill-

ers. Never mind. It could have been much worse. Perhaps aware how much worse, Blair did not try a second version, but left the "hint" for Hansard to correct.

By now the affliction was spreading. So keen was Geraint Davies (Lab, Croydon Central) to get the French "on" sound into his pronunciation of Santer that he leapt forward with a question about Jock Santer.

MPs giggled. Has a new mood of Presbyterian thrift

overtaken Brussels already? Who next in the Celtic onslaught? Liam Brittan?

The House was distracted from its fit of Spoonerism by Paddy Ashdown who told Blair that now Jock - sorry, Jacques - had gone, what was lacking was leadership. No organisation should be

left "leaderless". How true. It must be dreadful to be part of a gang whose leader is standing down, with confusion reigning about who will take over. It creates a vacuum.

Tories pointed fingers at Mr Ashdown and squealed "You You!" Were they recommending him for the Commis-

sion Presidency - replacing Jock with Paddy?

By now Mr Blair was limbering up for his next spat with the English language.

Invited by Ken Purchase (Lab, Wolverhampton NE) to offer some thoughts on poverty and housing benefit, the Prime Minister wanted to tell us that many people were coming into "the Labour market".

Unfortunately he said "the Labour Party", from which there has been a notable egress since the election. He

failed to correct this one, too. And never corrected his fourth slip.

John Wilkinson (C, Ruislip Northwood) told Blair of his concern that the tax burden on the self-employed had been increased. Blair, insisting there had been tax cuts not tax hikes, managed to avoid "cat tucks not tax tucks" but stumbled over "entry fee" and said "entry free" instead.

This may explain the conflict between Mr Blair and William Hague about whether

what we pay to the Exchequer is rising or falling. For and free are not the same thing at all, as Cherie will remind him.

John Prescott, himself no stranger to the verbal tangle, managed to say more yesterday - without speaking. The sunnied Deputy Prime Minister fresh back (said William Hague) from "chasing angel fish around a coral reef" in the Maldives, started the session with a V-sign at the Tory front bench. Hard to mistake that.

MATTHEW PARRIS
POLITICAL SKETCH

Clinton calls for a new Ulster accord

FROM DAMIAN WHITWORTH
IN WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT CLINTON was putting pressure on Northern Ireland leaders last night to break the deadlock over decommissioning of terrorist arms and push the peace process forward.

In separate meetings at the White House with David Trimble, the First Minister and Unionist leader, and Gerry Adams, president of Sinn Féin, the President was seeking to persuade them to overcome their differences even as each reiterated that disarming the IRA was still the major sticking point.



President Clinton talking to Bertie Ahern yesterday

Mr Trimble said the IRA's refusal to begin disarming prevented Sinn Féin from taking part in the power-sharing executive to run the Province. But he insisted that the republicans could ensure that the IRA began disarming.

"It is not a question of whether, but a question of when," he said before his St Patrick's Day meeting at the Oval Office. He said he remained confident that the peace process was not in danger.

"I think it is going to work. We have big problems in the short term with the paramilitaries, but there is no alternative. Even if we get stalled I think it will only be temporary," he said.

However, Mr Adams ruled out an IRA handover of weapons. "The demands he is making of me? I can't deliver those. He knows that. You know that. Everybody knows that."

He added: "The President knows as well as Mr Trimble that IRA (arms) decommissioning is not a precondition for Sinn Féin to hold ministerial office."

His comments contrasted sharply with those of Mo Mowlam, the Northern Ireland Secretary, who said on Tuesday that republicans and unionists were within a "hair's breadth" of reaching a solution on the stalled peace process. Mr Adams said that the car-bomb killing of Rosemary Nelson, the prominent Catholic human rights lawyer, had worsened the crisis.

"The situation here in Washington has been overshadowed by this killing. When I left to come here the sense of crisis had been deepened."

The White House said the day of meetings was intended to focus on "encouragement, not negotiations," and Mr Trimble said he expected Mr Clinton to apply "discreet" pressure. But he added that he believed "the President has some favours to call in," referring to the visa he had granted to Mr Adams in 1995 which helped to get the peace process moving.

The Government has given the parties until Good Friday to break the impasse or face the collapse of the peace process.

President Clinton gave warning that "enemies of peace are still rearing their heads in the Northern Ireland peace process" and he encouraged all those involved to lift their sights above the short-term difficulties. "They must see the distant horizon when children will grow up in Northern Ireland and not even remember how it used to be."

Speaking in the White House rose garden after Bertie Ahern, the Irish Prime Minister, had presented him with a bowl of shamrocks, he said that both sides must work together to implement the Good Friday accord.

"The parties must resolve their differences and do that they have to have the same spirit of co-operation and trust that led to the first agreement."

Earlier all sides had attended the annual St Patrick's Day lunch hosted by the Speaker on Capitol Hill. An American-Ireland fund dinner in honour of Senator Ted Kennedy on Tuesday night had been notable for the way that a point was made of welcoming Irish Unionists.



The statue of Queen Victoria is given appropriate St Patrick's Day headgear in Belfast yesterday

NEWS IN BRIEF

Record of railways 'is much worse'

One in five trains is cancelled or seriously delayed on some of Britain's busiest routes, according to new figures by passenger groups that suggest disruption is far more widespread than previously thought. More than 500,000 trains were cancelled or seriously delayed in 1998, suggesting that one journey in ten is disrupted. On long-distance routes, such as Virgin's West Coast and Cross Country lines, and Great Western, the proportion rises to more than one in five.

The disclosure is included in statistics that show, for the first time, the state of the railways across all services, rather than those selected for official figures. Government figures are based mainly on peak-time journeys.

Bad books

The public spending watchdog has exposed the poor quality of accounting in Government departments in a report to MPs. A fifth of all departments could not even manage to complete their annual accounts on time last year - yet five years ago just 1 per cent handed in late accounts.

Arson accused

A man will appear in a London court today charged with the murder of seven members of a family in an arson attack on a house in Chingford, Essex, last week. Scotland Yard detectives have ordered tight security around the identity of the man until he appears in court for fear of reprisals.

Jail gun find

Police were last night investigating how a handgun, ammunition and flak jacket were dumped outside a big London jail. The badly corroded weapon and other equipment were found on land between the perimeter fence and road outside Wormwood Scrubs prison in West London.

Terror extension

Anti-terrorist detectives were granted another 48 hours to continue questioning the Muslim cleric Abu Hamza al-Masri and two other men arrested on Monday in dawn raids in west London following allegations by Yemen of involvement in the kidnap of 40 Westerners.

Two trapped

Two eco-campaigners in tunnels under the old Crystal Palace site in South London are at the centre of a rescue operation after becoming trapped. The chamber in which Animal - Ellenor Hulton, 18, - and Ken have been living for 14 days has subsided, leaving the metal gate impassable.

Straw demands action over passport chaos

BY RICHARD FORD, HOME CORRESPONDENT

JACK STRAW held crisis talks yesterday over the immigration department chaos that has led to hundreds of people being trapped in Britain.

The Home Secretary called in Siemens Business Services, the computer firm at the centre of the problem to demand an action plan within a week to deal with the delays, which have resulted from a mass of travel documents being lost.

Mr Straw acted after the immigration and nationality department admitted that the delays in dealing with travel documents would continue for several more months. Ministers had previously said the problems would be overcome by Easter.

Thousands of people, including international businessmen, foreigners living in the UK and people requiring work permits, have suffered months-long delays at the Immigration and Nationality Directorate at Croydon in south

London. Many have been told that their best option is to go to their own high commission or embassy to order new passports.

Mr Straw is furious at the delays and failures in implementing new working practices and in introducing a new computer system to deal with immigration and asylum applications.

The chaos at the directorate has been caused by the relocation of 1,000 staff from Lunar House to an office in the nearby Whitgift Centre, and compounded by the new work practices and computer system. Officials have been forced to draft in extra staff to deal with up to 16,000 pieces of unopened mail and additional facsimile machines have been installed as thousands of angry foreigners besiege the directorate seeking information about their travel documents.

One Australian man, who sent his passport to the directorate to renew his residency permit, spent three weeks phoning the centre before getting through to an official. He was then told that it could take eight months to find his passport, which was accompanied by mortgage documents, references and bank statements to indicate he would not burden the state.

A Japanese woman was unable to attend her grandparents' funerals because her passport has been lost since last September.

Mike O'Brien, the Immigration Minister, who decided on the "big bang" of moving offices, retraining staff and computerisation all at once, said that the £70 million computerisation contract awarded to Siemens Business Services in 1996 was unrealistic and over-ambitious.

A spokeswoman for Siemens Business Services refused to discuss the talks at the Home Office.

Inquiry to halt hospital scandals

Continued from page 1

have had powers to inspect private and state homes and independent hospitals.

But the focus has been on long term nursing care and there has been no assessment of private medical care. It does not cover individual doctors and it does not have any appropriate sanctions.

The recent white paper on social services proposed 8 new regional commissions which would inspect nursing homes in both sectors but it will not apply to private acute hospitals. Mr Dobson is now considering setting up a separate inspectorate or commission to cover this anomaly.

Health department sources said the Government wanted to await the outcome of the select committee's report and its own consultation exercise before taking further action. "The government recognises the concern that exists regarding the regulatory framework

for hospitals and clinics in the private sector and we will shortly be consulting widely on future regulatory systems," said a spokesman.

But the government has been under mounting pressure from both the Tories and the private sector to extend regulation. Tonight the Lords will debate a Conservative amendment to the NHS bill which scraps GP fundholding, calling for greater regulation of the private sector. The Tories want the Health Service Bill to extend clinical assessment from the NHS to the private sector.

The Tories are pressing the government to expand the remit of the Commission for Health Improvement, which is being set up in the Bill, which will have the power to make spot checks on clinical procedures, to inspect and enter NHS hospitals and to carry out quality reviews.

Having defeated the Government on one amendment ear-

lier this week, the Tories are hoping for another victory. "At present patients using the private sector do not have the same safeguards of regulation that those who use the health service are entitled to," said a Tory spokesman.

BUFA, Britain's largest private health insurance company is also keen for a national inspectorate for the independent sector and supports the

publication of league tables. A spokeswoman for BUFA said that the company would call for greater regulation when it gives oral evidence to the health committee next Thursday. It argues that an inspectorate would also help root out poor standards in small private clinics set up by doctors to minor operations.

Leeward inquiry, page 8

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24,000 films: a life in celluloid



A determined Welshman has set a new world record for watching movies, writes Simon de Bruxelles

HE DOES not like horror, violence or bad language, so Gwilym Hughes's place in cinema history is all the more impressive. He has just watched his 24,000th film, and nobody in the world can beat that.

It is getting harder for the greatest of all movie buffs to see films as they were intended. He has kept notes on every movie he has seen since the age of seven, and for years he visited the cinema at least ten times a week, but since his local cinema closed in mid-Wales, he has settled instead for a black-and-white television in a bedroom while his wife watches soap operas on the colour set downstairs.

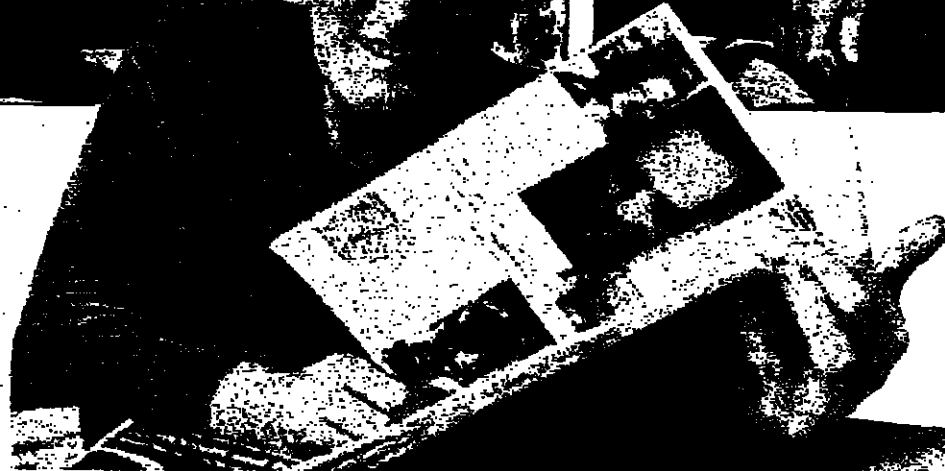
Not for the world's most avid film fan the luxury of digital, cable or widescreen television. Mr Hughes, 53, cannot even get Channel 5 on his portable and has to watch S4C, the Welsh language version of Channel 4. These drawbacks have not stopped him watching at least 18 films a week, though, for the latest blockbusters, he has to wait until

they arrive in his local video store. "The nearest cinemas is about 20 miles away and I don't drive, so it depends if a mate is going or not," he said. "The last film I saw there was *Saving Private Ryan*, which was superb."

The retired painter and decorator has an assured place in *The Guinness Book of Records*. He expects to reach a total of 25,000 by April next year. But he says: "I am an old-fashioned film fan, I don't like all this violence and bad language you get in the cinema nowadays."

"I haven't seen any horror movies, not even *The Exorcist*. Who wants to go to the cinema to see film of a girl vomiting, I ask you? I want to watch a film to be entertained not be sickened by it. I don't like the way horror films these days are full of death, destruction and nightmares." He has never seen a film by Quentin Tarantino.

Mr Hughes caught the film bug in hospital as a child when he saw *King Solomon's Mines* while recuperating



Gwilym Hughes with some of his film books. His favourite films include *Gone With The Wind*, above left, and *Zulu*. He said: "I want to be entertained"

from an operation. He said: "It has stayed with me all my life. I've never been bored and I still watch every film with great keenness. Once the titles start rolling, I'm completely hooked. I've seen more of life than most people even though I have not travelled very far."

As a student he took time off between lectures to pop into the local cinema and on one memorable day, recorded for posterity in his notebook, he saw eight films in different cinemas in Coventry.

In the 1970s, he was secretary of the Dolgellau Film Club. Members would club together to hire the latest art release from London. Since the club folded shortly after the in-

roduction of video players, his hobby has become a solitary pursuit.

He first won his place in *The Guinness Book of Records* when he heard someone say on the radio that it contained very few Welsh entries. National pride at stake, he went immediately to the local bookshop to browse through a copy. Knowing he was never likely to break the 100 metres record or find the world's biggest diamond, he turned straight to the section on cinema. There it recorded that Albert E. van Schmus, the American film censor from 1949 to 1982, had seen more movies than anyone else in history. Van Schmus may have watched 16,945 films.

Mr Hughes had a record of the 20,000 films he had seen in more than 100 notebooks and he took the American's place in the record book in 1992. His new record will appear in the next edition. He does not want to be crowned the King of the Couch Potatoes and says he has plenty of time in his life for other interests. He is a member of 12 local organisations, is an enthusiastic bowls player, and he finds time occasionally to join his wife, Eirlys, for an episode of *EastEnders*.

He was forced to give up work through ill-health 15 years ago, a legacy of hip problems he had as a child. He said: "I've spent around four years of my life in hospital so I've also had a lot of time to watch films on television."

THE GWILYM HUGHES GUIDE TO THE GREATEST FILMS

Lawrence of Arabia — "I love David Lean. To me he was the master. To work in that temperature and to get so much remarkable footage, even the music was superb."

Gone with the Wind — "That's a classic, isn't it, but there's sadness too, as the author died penniless. The scene that really gets me is where Vivien Leigh is running through an orchard and there's blossom everywhere."

Empire of the Sun — "There's a beautiful haunting Welsh air in it, but I also like the lad's

image of the war through his eyes. He was too young to realise the danger."

Schindler's List — "It's beyond imagination how people could do such things to their fellow human beings. How Spielberg used the black-and-white and the colour film — it's so effective."

Zulu — "The Welsh Borderers' finest hour. Mr Morris, manager of the Dolgellau Plaza, wrote an open letter to the public urging them to see it because it's part of Welsh history."

BARRY NORMAN'S TWO YEARS IN FRONT OF THE SCREEN

OF SOME 235,000 films made in the history of cinema, the critic Barry Norman claims to have seen more than 12,000 — the estimated equivalent of two years in a cinema (Dalya Alferge writes).

James Ferman, the former director of the British Board of Film Classification, has no idea of his record and "couldn't begin to estimate", but Sir Sydney Samuelsen, the first British Film Commissioner, who is now senior consultant to the British Film Commission, believes he has seen about 3,000.

He saw some 600 in his first two years in the business. "I used to be cinema projectionist," he recalled. "That's how I started. When I was 14 I was a rewind boy at the local cinema, which showed six feature films a week. That means that I saw 360 a year — during my first year's work, when I was 14 and 15, that means I saw 600." He has never counted

the films and can only estimate the total. He picks out as a favourite David Lean's *Lawrence of Arabia*, "which I think is cinema at its very best". He said: "David Lean was the greatest storyteller of cinema of all time." Another favourite is *Cinema Paradiso*, which is "exactly like my own story".

Among films he has most disliked is *Reservoir Dogs*. "Some say it is a most brilliant, outstanding movie. I just thought it shouldn't be shown. I'm old-fashioned on these things, but, when I pick out the worst, I mean the worst experience for me. I can't stand explicit violence."

The critic David Robinson, whose career began some 40 years ago, said he must have averaged 250 a year. "I put it conservatively at 10,000 — and I don't remember them all. The awful ones I've forgotten and the brilliant ones are too numerous to pick out."

Morris and Noakes make a comeback with the animals

BY CAROL MIDGLEY
MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

TWO veterans from the golden age of BBC children's television are to make a comeback on ITV. Johnny Morris, the *Animal Magic* presenter with the zoo animal "voices", and the *Blue Peter* star John Noakes, famed for his Border Collie, Shep, are to feature in new animal shows.

ITV is also to screen a modern version of *The Family*, the first fly-on-the-wall "docu-soap". In 1974 it was the Wilkins family of Reading. Next month it will be the turn of the Henrys, a mixed race family from Leeds chosen to embody the "quintessential British family of the late 1990s".

Morris, 82, will revive his animal characters in a new series, *Wild Thing*, on children's ITV. Speaking from his farm home in Berkshire, he said: "My sort of stuff is dead and buried, but they have found a lot of children like that sort of thing. Many mothers who were children when I was presenting come up to me and ask why they don't get more of



Morris and a young friend appearing in *Animal Magic*

my sort of programme, which was non-violent, amusing, informative and gentle. There is so much violence, and children need the comfort of an arm around their shoulder and to be reassured everything is all right."

Morris is no fan of current animal programming. In the past he has called *Pets Win Prizes* "disgusting" and *Animal Hospital* and the Channel 4 show *Pet Rescue* "exploitative". Noakes, 65, who admitted

to crying when Shep died, will front *Mad About Pets*, an animal roadshow that aims to find the most talented, extraordinary and pampered pets.

Noakes has not been seen regularly on our screens since *Coast To Coast*, broadcast seven years ago, which was about his voyages on the boat on which he lives in Spain. But his voice has been heard on the Andrex lavatory paper advertisements.

A spokeswoman for LWT, makers of *Mad About Pets*, said: "He was the first person who came to mind for the job. Everyone knows him from having Shep and how much he loves animals."

For the series, about the Henrys, *Family Life*, television crews spent eight months living with them. The Henrys

have experienced most aspects of modern family life — divorce, illegitimacy, aspiration and academic success.

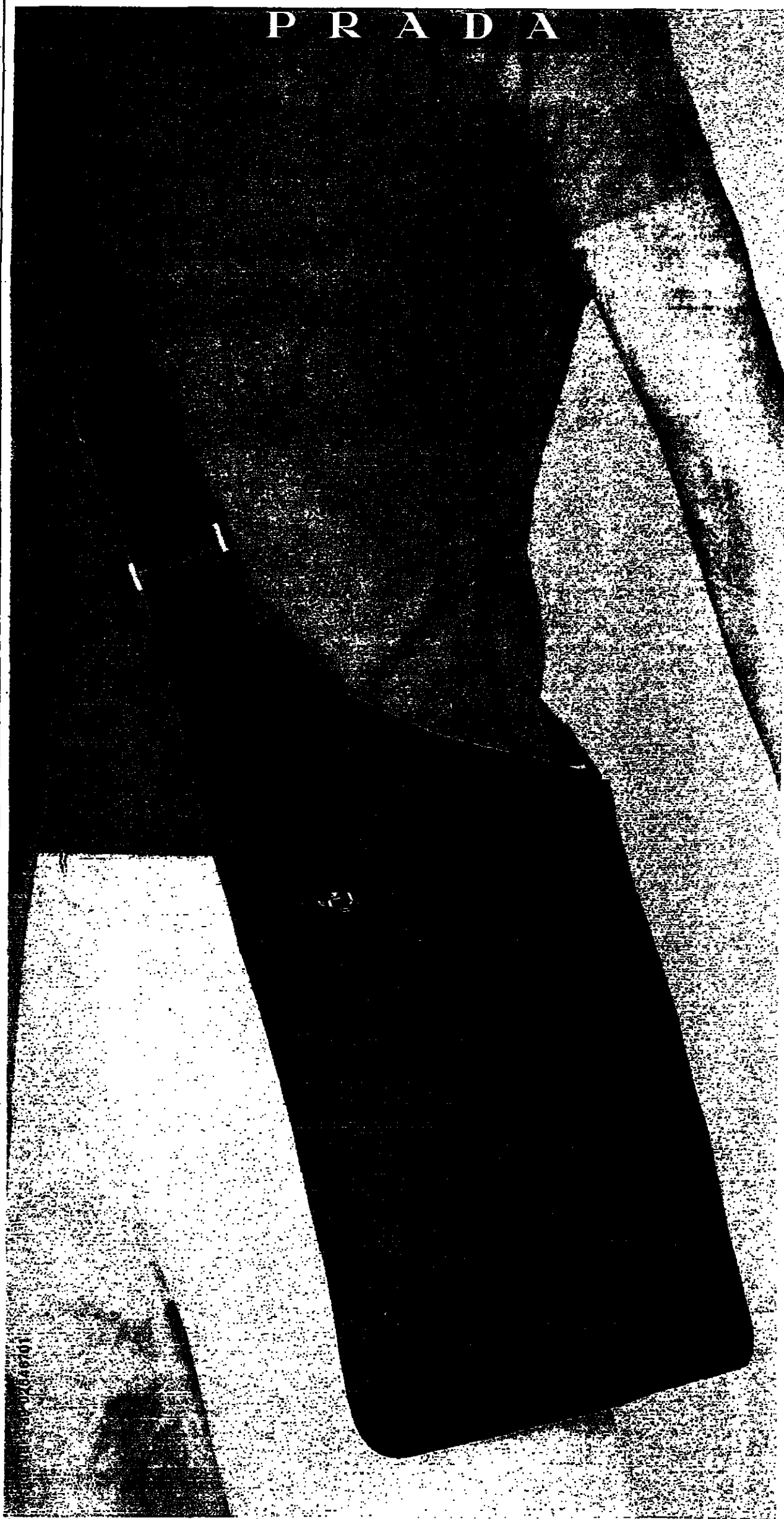
Twenty five years ago, the nation was scandalised by Margaret and Terry Wilkins allowing their daughter, Marion, to live with Tom the lodger under their roof. Their younger daughter also raised eyebrows by bringing home a black boyfriend.

Margaret and Terry later divorced, Marion left Tom and her second husband and remarried, and Heather went on to bring up four children.

The producers of ITV's new offering claim their series will chart the dramatic social changes in Britain over the past 40 years. Kay and Alf Henry, who live on the Seaford council estate in Leeds, have been married for 37 years. Mr Henry came to Britain in 1956 from St Kitts and met Kay at a time when mixed race relationships were taboo. She went into labour on the day of their wedding.

Ben Gale, series producer, said his team had spent more than three months trying to find the right family to represent modern Britain. "We didn't go out to find a mixed race family but when we met them we knew they really did reflect British life now."

Family Life, which will be broadcast on ITV in April, was unveiled at the launch of the network's new spring and summer schedule.



INSIDE SECTION 2

A History of...

Ministers take cover as A-level reform arrives

John O'Leary says reform by stealth has already lessened the currency of 'gold standard'

THE changes in the sixth-form curriculum to be announced tomorrow are being billed as the biggest since A-levels were introduced but the announcement will have all the razzmatazz given to a rise in the unemployment figures.

In contrast to this week's mathematics initiative, there will be no sign of the Prime Minister, no celebrity cheerleaders. The news is to be released on the day normally devoted to ministerial visits to constituencies and spin-doctors will be hoping that a critical report on Hackney educa-

tion authority will distract attention.

The explanation for this low profile is that the Government expects bricksbats from all sides. Traditionalists will claim that the move to five subjects in the sixth-form amounts to "dumbing down"; progressives will argue that the reforms do not go far enough; and schools will complain of the added pressure on their budgets and timetables.

In reality, A-level has been reformed by stealth over more than a decade. The gradual shift to modular courses, allow-

ing pupils to take mini-exams as they complete each section of the course, has changed the "gold standard" beyond recognition. Pass rates have soared and competition for the best grades has seen the rise of "soft" subjects such as media studies and sport, with an accompanying decline in traditional subjects such as classics.

The impact of the latest reform, which will guarantee traditional syllabuses in all subjects, is likely to be much less than the drift that has gone before. Most schools will wait to see how universities react be-

fore they plan upheaval. Their fear is that admissions tutors in the best universities will continue to award places on the basis of A-levels, ignoring the new tests of "key skills" and the revamped AS levels.

Baroness Blackstone's reform, like many similar proposals before it, is intended to encourage greater breadth of study. But the package is a compromise born of lengthy negotiations with Downing Street. She had hoped to move further towards the baccalaureate model, requiring students to take a variety of different

types of subject, mixing the oil and water of arts and sciences. Unlike the International Baccalaureate, which Sevenoaks School in Kent is adopting to the eventual exclusion of A-levels, the new model will leave schools to decide how broad a range of subjects is studied. Students may take five, or, more likely, four, arts or science subjects if they wish, thereby postponing a decision on specialisation rather than adding breadth.

The one-year AS level will be welcomed by most schools as a more manageable way to teach extra courses than the previous two-year format. Heads remain to be convinced that universities will give full credit for the new examination but, like the results of modular tests taken during an A-level course, it will provide hard evidence of achievement for university applicants.

However, it remains to be seen whether schools and colleges will be able to go into the same degree of depth while fitting in more academic subjects and adding courses on the key skills of information technology, numeracy and communication. If highly academic schools decide that the A-level currency is being devalued, Sevenoaks may not be the last to look for an alternative.

Leading article, page 25



New challenge: Amy Nolan studying baccalaureate papers at Sevenoaks School

A TALE OF TWO EXAMINATIONS

INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE

- Established: 1962 as an international qualification in 20 schools. Devised by Unesco-sponsored educationists.
- Candidates: more than 35,000 in 770 schools in 95 countries.
- Reforms: none.
- Structure: six subjects from different areas of the curriculum, three taken to advanced level with one extended essay; separate course on the theory of knowledge, plus creativity, action and service requirement. Up to 20 per cent coursework, but single examinations in every subject.
- Assessment: maximum of 45 points (seven per subject, plus three for theory of knowledge and essay).
- Sample history question: "Account for the flux in relations between the superpowers between 1953 and 1963."
- Oddity: exams are taken simultaneously throughout the world, leading to 10pm start times in Hong Kong.

A LEVEL

- Established: 1951. Replaced Higher School Certificate for 40,000 teenagers.
- Candidates: more than 250,000 in Britain alone in 1998.
- Reforms: Schools Council proposals in 1966 for major and minor subjects, plus general studies, rejected. Two-year AS level introduced 1984 to broaden curriculum. In 1988 proposal for five "leaner, tougher" A-levels rejected.
- Structure: six modules over two years, or traditional single examination. New system will encourage five subjects in first year, three to A-level, plus "Key Skills" of information technology, numeracy and communication.
- Assessment: maximum ten points per A-level; maximum of five per AS level; tariff for key skills to be determined.
- Sample history question: "When and for what reasons did the peace settlements of 1919-23 begin to break down?"
- Oddity: general studies has seen biggest increase in candidates, but is still not accepted by many universities.

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Law lords to rule on Pinochet next week

BY FRANCES GIBB
LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

GENERAL Augusto Pinochet will learn next week if he can go home or must remain in England to face possible extradition to Spain on alleged human rights abuses.

The House of Lords confirmed yesterday that the law lords led by Sir Nicolas Browne-Wilkinson will give their final ruling next Wednesday on whether the former Chilean dictator is immune from arrest and prosecution.

The panel of seven law lords will decide whether his status as a former head of state endows him with sovereign immunity from extradition over abuses including torture, attempted murder and murder committed between 1972 and 1990.

To Russia, with love from MoD

BY MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE EDITOR

THE Ministry of Defence is investing more than £5 million to help thousands of officers to switch from military careers to civilian employment — but they are all Russian officers.

After success in finding civilian jobs for British military personnel made redundant or who retired early because of the post-Cold War cutbacks, the MoD has been offering its services to Moscow.

Yesterday another 40 retiring Russian officers completed their three-month resettlement course, sponsored by the MoD. The special deal for retiring Russian officers is part of the Government's defence diplomacy project, under which every effort is made by the British military to improve relations with their counterparts in Russia.

With the Russian Armed Forces undergoing drastic reforms — also because of the

end of the Cold War — the MoD has moved in to show the redundant officers how to become bank managers, computer programmers, and even members of the Russian "tax police".

Yesterday the MoD said that, by March 2000, ministry experts would have retrained about 7,000 Russian officers.

To help to focus their efforts, the ministry men have been operating projects in seven towns across Russia — St Petersburg, Scholkovo, Kronshtadt, Nizhny Novgorod, Rostov-on-Don and Vladivostok.

The MoD is also funding English language courses for Russian officers at the English language schools of the British Council in Central Moscow and St Petersburg.

Yesterday's graduation of the latest batch of retired officers took place at the Scholkovo professional lycée on the outskirts of Moscow.

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200 million DNA tests in 1983 million

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200 men face DNA tests on 1983 murder

POLICE are to conduct DNA tests on more than 200 men after reopening the files on a killing 15 years ago that became known as the 'Beauty in the Bath' murder. Detectives hope that advances in forensic technology will finally help them to solve the murder of Cynthia Bolshaw, a beautician who was left lying face down in her bath, wearing only a necklace and earrings.

Prominent businessmen in the Chester area are among the men whose names appeared in the pocket diaries of the 50-year-old divorcee, strangled apparently after entertaining a lover. Results of the tests from mouth swabs will be checked against a genetic profile gathered from forensic science evidence that has lain undisturbed in a laboratory.

Superintendent David Smith, of Merseyside Police, said: "There has been a worried person out there. We want that person to look to his conscience and provide an explanation. This is not going to go away."

Mrs Bolshaw was a cosmet-



Cynthia Bolshaw: found strangled in her bath

Businessmen are on the list as detectives reopen case of strangled beautician, writes Russell Jenkins

ics consultant at the Christian Dior counter at Browns, a department store in Chester. After work on Saturday, October 8, 1983, she drove home to The Wirral in her red Toyota Corolla, dropping off a friend in Neston. She had spoken of spending a quiet evening at home with a bottle of wine at her two-bedroom bungalow in Buffs Lane, a sought-after area of Heswall. She was due to spend Sunday with her newly married son, then a navigator based at RAF Bawtry, near Doncaster, and his young bride.

It is thought that she cooked a supper of fish. At about 9pm, a schoolboy at a nearby bus stop noticed the curtains being drawn. At some point in the evening, she is believed to have entertained somebody in the house. Evidence suggested that she drank brandy and sherry with her visitor. Reports at the time suggested that she had sex shortly before being killed, but Mr Smith refused to confirm this.

When her sister and brother-in-law visited the following day, they discovered that the back door was open. Her work clothes were piled neatly on the bed. Mrs Bolshaw was lying dead in the bath. She had

apparently been dragged from the bedroom, where the killer had strangled her with his hands. The killer used her car to make his escape. It was discovered parked in an entrance to a field five miles away on the A540 to Chester. Five days later, some of her jewellery, including a 22-carat gold wishbone ring, was discovered wrapped in a nylon stocking in a telephone box in Romiley, Greater Manchester.

At the time, detectives poured over 14 meticulous diaries, interviewing boyfriends at length. Interpol inquiries were made as far as Uganda, Tokyo, Dubai and New York. Five officers have been allotted to the investigation which will mean a re-examination of as many as 1,200 people, Mr Smith said: "As we eliminate people, we should be able to get closer to the killer."



The Jelly Babies celebrate the 80th birthday of the famous Jelly Babies

Age Concern finds 'Jellyatric' sweets are not to its taste

BY HELEN JOHNSTONE

A SWEET designed to offer an amusing alternative to the Jelly Baby, which this year celebrates its 80th birthday, has been given a sour welcome by Age Concern.

Jelly Babies, as the name suggests, are based on elderly characters with walking sticks and Zimmer frames. More than a million of the sweets have been distributed to 3,000 shops this week, including Tesco and Jet petrol stations, ready to go on sale.

Lemon-flavoured Bill Bird wears a flat cap and runs a sanctuary for injured birds in Jellytown. Raspberry-flavoured Bryan Bashful is a retired professor who is never without his cardigan and needs a walking stick to get around. The orange Frau Zimmer, with her fondness for baking, is even less mobile, while her friend Olive Green is the fastest knitter in Jellytown.

Age Concern yesterday described Jelly Babies as "clichéd elderly characters" and criticised the makers for perpetuating stereotypes. A spokesman for the pensioners' pressure group said: "It's unfortunate they have to use stereotypes which do not represent the majority of 80-year-olds."

Ashley Sims, who came up with

the Jelly Babies range after hearing on the radio that Jelly Babies were soon to celebrate their 80th birthday, claimed yesterday that, if Age Concern learnt something about the characters, it would not be offended.

Mr Sims, 27, from Duffield, Derbyshire, said: "I thought they were getting a bit old to be babies. It took me two days to think of the name before I registered it as a trademark. But the Jelly Babies have taken two and a half years to develop."

Mr Sims, who also invented the upside-down map, had his idea turned down by several companies, including Jelly Babies maker Trebor Bassett, before finally agreeing a five-year contract with Barnac, of Peterborough. The former salesman is hoping to extend the idea to toy and crockery manufacturers. "I also have a firm that's interested in making Jellyatric toys. They would also make good characters for a television cartoon."

Mr Sims, who left school with one O-level before studying business at college, also plans to launch the world's first Afro-Caribbean sweet, a blackcurrant-flavoured Jamaican Jellyatric named Pastor Deakus.

Client wins claim against lawyers

BY FRANCES GIBB, LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

AN ENGINEER who refused to pay a £1,800 legal bill when he found he had been advised by a non-lawyer won a test ruling in the Court of Appeal yesterday.

Lord Justice Shiemann ruled that Stuart Pilbrow does not have to pay his legal bill because the firm of solicitors did not inform him that his affairs were being handled by a non-lawyer.

Mr Pilbrow, of Lower Dene, East Grinstead, West Sussex, rang his local law firm, Pearless De Rougemont, over a family matter and asked to speak to a solicitor, but was put through to a woman who at the time was not even qualified as a legal executive.

The judge, sitting with Lady Justice Butler-Sloss, said he was not criticising the widespread practice of solicitors delegating work to others "be they typists, legal executives or whatever" but the right to delegate depended on the implied consent of the client.

The ruling was hailed by Mr Pilbrow as "a victory for consumers."

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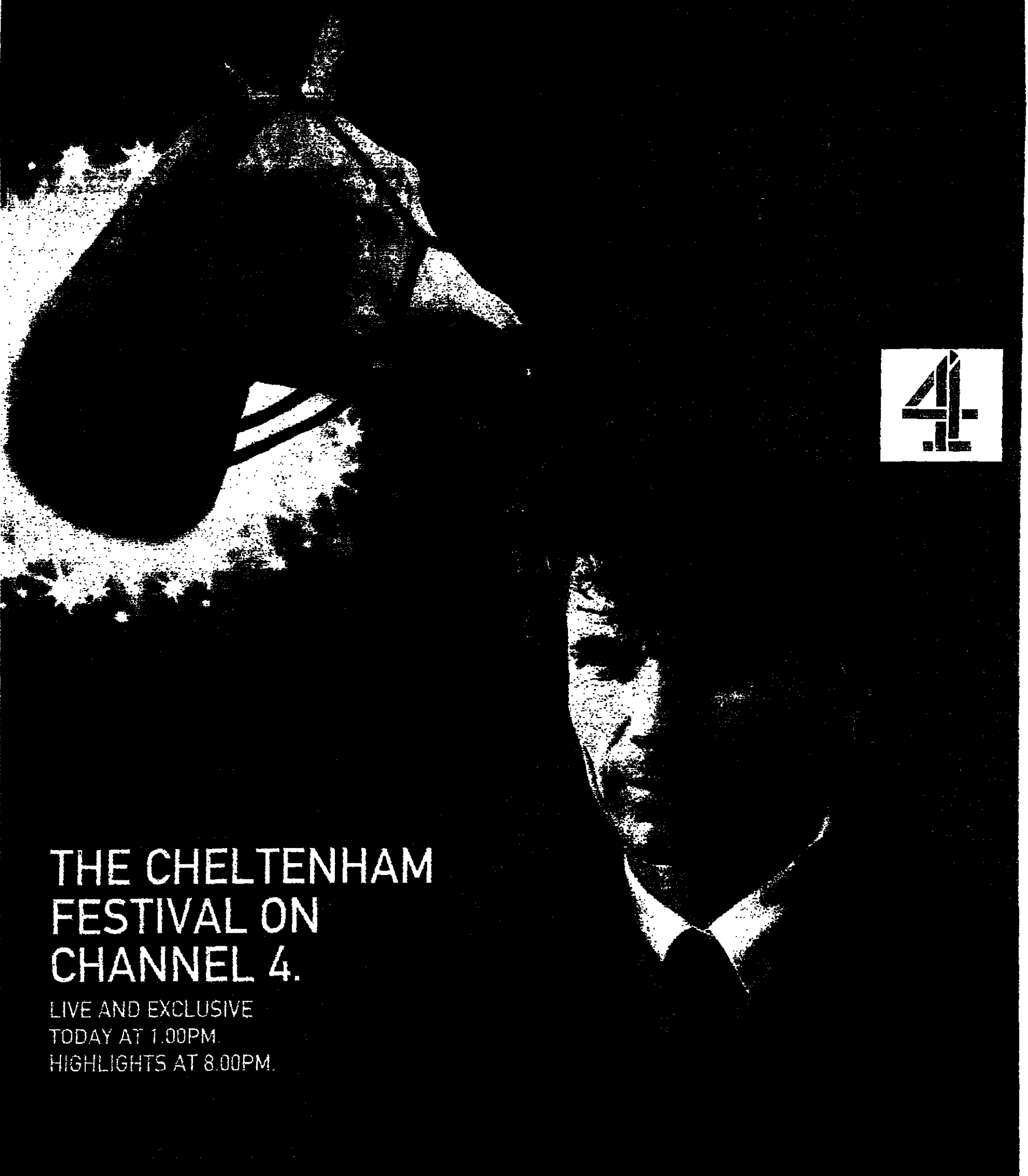
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Inquiry examines new cars 'rip-off'

Manufacturers stand accused of inflating prices, reports Arthur Leathley

THE pricing of new cars is to be investigated by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission in the wake of a report that lambasts motor manufacturers for forcing dealers to charge inflated prices. New cars in Britain cost up to 50 per cent more than in other European countries.

The Monopolies and Mergers Commission's investigation into the relationship between manufacturers and dealers was ordered yesterday by John Bridgeman, the Director-General of Fair Trading. He criticised price distortion by manufacturers and the refusal of some of them, and dealers, to provide information to his own inquiry. He also made clear that he will use new powers, which come into force next month, to prosecute those who fail to co-operate with future inquiries. Conviction for obstruction will carry a maximum two-year sentence and an unlimited fine.

Mr Bridgeman's seven-month investigation into 17 leading manufacturers and more than 400 dealers found evidence that car makers are refusing to give discounts to dealers that could be passed on to motorists. Dealers complained that huge discounts for fleet car sales were effectively subsidised by the public

through artificially inflated forecourt prices.

"The market isn't working properly and there is an imbalance of power between manufacturers and dealers which is distorting competition," He criticised manufacturers for not giving dealers discounts for sales volume, providing little incentive to cut prices to increase sales figures.

He also attacked the setting by manufacturers of inflated prices, which "are being used to mask the true selling prices of vehicles". Manufacturers set a recommended resale

price, now outlawed on electrical goods, from which discounts were offered by dealers. Mr Bridgeman suggested that the commission, which will have nine months to publish its findings, might call for the practice to be made unlawful.

Stephen Byers, the Trade and Industry Secretary, may have to introduce legislation to implement some of the commission's recommendations if it calls for drastic changes to the pricing of some two million new cars sold in Britain each year. The motor industry was investigated by the Mo-

nopolies and Mergers Commission in 1992 but Mr Bridgeman said that the commission's recommendations had not had the desired effect. He added: "Overall, the distribution of new cars appears to be as inefficient as it was eight years ago." He is carrying out a separate investigation into alleged cartels in the motor industry.

Paul Everitt, head of policy at the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, said: "We are complying with the rules and we believe that the British consumer is getting a good deal. We are offering very competitive prices. You have to remember that the prices compared in European surveys look merely at the list price of vehicles. What people actually pay in Britain is usually a lot less."

Alan Pulham, director of the National Franchised Dealerships Association, said he hoped the investigation would loosen the "stranglehold" manufacturers had over dealers.

Sheila McKechnie, director of the Consumers' Association, said: "We will be showing the MMC inquiry our detailed evidence of the scale of the problem as part of our campaign to end the great British car rip-off."

HOW PRICES COMPARE

Even cars built in Britain and shipped to the Continent are on sale at a much lower cost than at home.

According to a European Commission survey last month, Rover, owned by BMW, was the company with the biggest differentials. Its 214 hatchbacks, built in Birmingham, cost nearly 52 per cent more in Britain than in France - £10,953 against £7,210.

Other large differentials include Alfa Romeo 145,

£7,417 in Spain, £10,776 in Britain (45.3 per cent); Fiat Bravo, £7,281 in The Netherlands, £10,557 in Britain (45 per cent); Rover 414, £7,949 in Portugal, £11,379 in Britain (43 per cent).

Other examples include the Ford Focus, £7,946 in Portugal, £10,157 in Britain (27.8 per cent); Range Rover V8i, £28,949 in Portugal, £35,574 in Britain (22.9 per cent); VW Polo, £5,429 in Sweden, £7,163 in Britain (32 per cent).



John Dunn with his father's 1977 Beetle: "He was worried that it would get damaged"

Careful owner drives up price of shiny Beetle

By SIMON DE BRUXELLES

"ONE careful owner" is an understatement when it refers to Reg Dunn's beloved Volkswagen Beetle.

The late Mr Dunn bought the silver car new in 1977 and since then it has travelled only 1,050 miles. On the rare occasions that he took it for a spin he checked weather forecasts for the previous three days to ensure there was no danger of the immaculate bodywork coming into contact with mud.

Mr Dunn never drove the car further than 36 miles and banned his wife, Edna, from driving it, although he did allow her to occupy the passenger seat.

Today Mr Dunn's pride and joy is expected to fetch more than the price of a new car when it is sold at auction, looking no different to the day it left the showroom 22 years ago. Bidding at Bristol Auction Rooms is expected to start

at £10,000 and could reach £20,000.

The former gunshop owner, who died in 1986 aged 73, bought the limited edition Beetle for £2,400 in 1977 after hearing that VW were stopping German production for the British market. His son John, 61, said yesterday: "Even in the late 70s, he found driving conditions a bit cut and thrust and was worried that it would get damaged."

Mrs Dunn, who died in December, never drove the car and rejected several offers of £10,000. The closest she came to selling was to offer first refusal to the German footballer Jürgen Klinsmann, then playing for Tottenham Hotspur. He turned the offer down.

Her son said: "My mother and father were both great fans of German workmanship and mother believed that Herr Klinsmann embodied true sportsmanship."

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BY RUTH GLEDHILL, RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

There were further difficulties when the rector was charged with "wilfully and indecently exposing himself" in a public lavatory. He was convicted by magistrates and suspended from his job, but in 1990 had his conviction overturned because the prose-

Roger Lyons, MSF general secretary, said that Mr Cheesman was distraught over the judgment.



A design from Hussein Chalayan's TSE collection, left, and part of his London Fashion Week show. The week attracted almost 2,000 buyers

BY LISA ARMSTRONG
FASHION EDITOR

The enigmatic 28-year-old Central St Martin's graduate first appeared in 1993 with a collection which, he said at the

Alexander McQueen, who was diplomatically presented with a special achievement award last night, has announced that he will show in New York next season, and Chalayan was rumoured to be moving his show there. But

This year's London Fashion Week was one of the most successful. The number of buyers attending was about 2,000, 16 per cent up on last year. John Wilson, chief executive of the British Fashion Council, said yesterday: "We were delighted with the way things went. It is a hopeful sign that Britain is still regarded internationally as a cradle of talent."

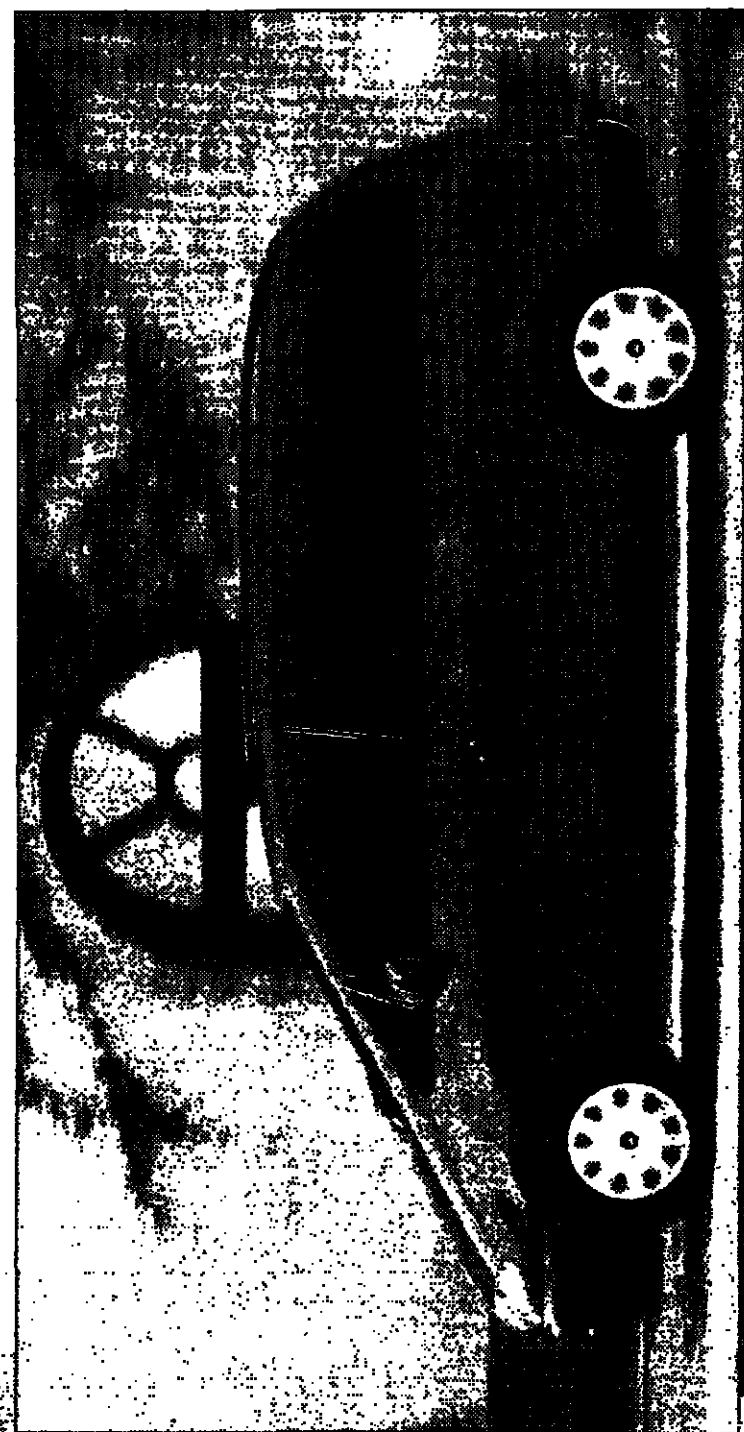
By MARK INGLEFIELD
POLITICAL REPORTER

He also said he would be seeking the advice of Jack Straw, the Home Secretary.

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Father tells of girl's heart surgery death

Couple thanked disgraced doctor for trying to save their daughter's life, reports

Ian Murray

THREE fathers told the story of their babies' heart operations to the Bristol hospital deaths public inquiry yesterday.

The two whose children survived had nothing but praise for the care they had received, but Michael Parsons, whose daughter died, described the actions of the care by the same staff as "criminal".

Both Mr Parsons and John McLorinan had children born with Down's syndrome, which is commonly linked to heart problems. Mr Parsons' daughter Mia died in the operating theatre after a nine-hour operation by James Wisheart, the consultant surgeon who was struck off last June. Mr McLorinan's son, Joe, is nine now, and full of energy, six years after Mr Wisheart operated on him.

Philip Wagstaff, 34, from Exeter, said that his daughter, Amy, had been born with two holes in the heart and a narrowed artery, but was "very very well" after an operation performed by Mr Wisheart. The operation was a success and Amy, now seven, is "very very well".

Mr Parsons, 47, from Carmarthen, told the inquiry in Bristol that Mr Wisheart said there was only a 20 per cent chance of his daughter dying if she had the operation to repair a hole in her heart.

"He told us that, without the operation, Mia would die, but with it she could run and jump and play like any normal child," he said. "We decided to have the full operation on the basis that it would save her life, on the basis of the low risk percentage and on the basis of Mr Wisheart's reputation. We were happy we were in the best of hands and it was a privilege for us to be there. We bonded very well with Mr Wisheart."

Early on the morning of the operation in May 1993, Mr Parsons said, a nurse at the infirmary asked him and his wife to give Mia the pre-medication that would send her to sleep before the anaesthetic. They refused, and the nurse "who just wanted to go home" split some. The baby did not go to sleep.

"I was content to cuddle her in my arms, but I deeply regret now my decision to ask the nurse to give the pre-medication," he said.

Mr Parsons said that he carried Mia to the operating theatre, where "I handed Mia over



Michael Parsons, whose daughter, Mia, died in surgery

to the anaesthetist and then my wife gave her a kiss. As the anaesthetist gave her an injection, Mia gave what I think was the hardest scream she had ever screamed. For some reason I said: 'That's right Mia: kick back at the bastards. I don't know why I said that. I had no idea then that things were going to work out as badly as they did.'

"They waited for news in a ward where there was a woman with a two-year-old girl being admitted for an operation the next day. Nine and a half hours after Mia's operation began, a nurse came in and told them that she had died. The woman with the little girl became distraught, so they went out into the corridor. Shortly afterwards they saw Mr Wisheart, who told them that the operation had been a success, but that Mia's heart had failed to restart after she was taken off the bypass machine while the heart was undergoing surgery. 'We felt shocked

and dazed, but because he was so distressed, we felt sympathy for Mr Wisheart and thanked him for trying to save Mia's life.' Mr Parsons said.

The couple were then asked if they wanted to see Mia to say goodbye to her. They were shown into what Mr Parsons described as a junk room with a small sofa in it. "They brought her in a white babygrow suit and a Moses basket. My wife doesn't like white and it shocked and hurt her to see our daughter wearing it. She was bloated and did not look like our daughter."

The cardiac unit support staff worker took a photograph of his wife with the baby, cut off a lock of her hair and took hand and foot prints for them. Then they were asked to leave, even though they wanted to stay.

"They said we would disrupt the ward. We found ourselves out of the door completely distressed and dazed. We wandered around the streets of Bristol crying, with people staring at us."



John McLorinan: spoke highly of Mr Wisheart

Mr Parsons said that it was not until last June when they saw a television programme about the GMC investigation into the deaths of 29 babies at the hospital that they suspected anything was wrong. They then discovered for the first time that Mia was one of the babies included in the inquiry.

Since then, Mr Parsons said, he had been told by a Down's syndrome charity worker that the hospital was known as "the killing fields" by some consultants in the South West. It was criminal, he said, that Mr Wisheart had been allowed to continue operating when it was known he had a high failure rate.

But Mr McLorinan could not have spoken more highly of the surgeon, who operated on his son. The boy had been born with other serious conditions apart from the hole in his heart, and doctors had warned him and his wife that the baby had a 20 per cent chance of survival. As time went by, Joe's condition improved and the couple were told he had a 50 per cent chance of surviving the heart operation. "It was on the toss of a coin, but we wanted him to have a chance because otherwise he would die," said Mr McLorinan, 50, from Weston-super-Mare.

"We were so confident that in Bristol we had got the best, even though the operation was a high risk," he said. After the operation Joe had needed heart stimulation in the middle of the night and Mr Wisheart had turned up to see him then. "At all times of day or night you could see him walking about the wards," he said. "He was a very caring man and never seemed to go home."

"We were very lucky to get someone prepared to take the risk and operate on him. We are very, very satisfied."

Mr Wagstaff said that, after the operation on Amy, she became ill and they were told that she had a blood clot on the heart, which had to be removed by a further operation. Mr Wisheart performed this in the intensive care unit.

The inquiry continues.

Inquiry over 'maimed women'

By Helen Williams

THE Health Secretary has set up an independent inquiry into why the incompetence of a gynaecologist who was struck off last September did not come to light earlier, it was announced yesterday.

Rodney Ledward's botched operations left more than 200 women maimed. He worked as a consultant gynaecologist at the South Kent Hospitals NHS Trust and was dismissed in December 1996.

The inquiry, set up by Frank Dobson, will review the role of the trust, its predecessor body, and other organisations concerned with quality of care. It will investigate the care of patients treated by Mr Ledward at the trust between 1990 and 1996 and earlier events where appropriate. Its recommendations could be incorporated into guidance for NHS hospitals.

Soon after the General Medical Council's verdict to strike Mr Ledward off the medical register, Mr Dobson told the trust to carry out a review of his work. Within two months of his being struck off, 179 women had come forward with concerns at surgical treatment by him. The trust is encouraging his former patients who need help to come forward.

The inquiry, to sit in private and report to Mr Dobson, will be chaired by Jean Ritchie, QC. Mr Dobson said: "It is vital that the public has full confidence in the NHS's commitment to clinical quality, and know that steps are being taken to ensure it is of the highest standard." (PA News)

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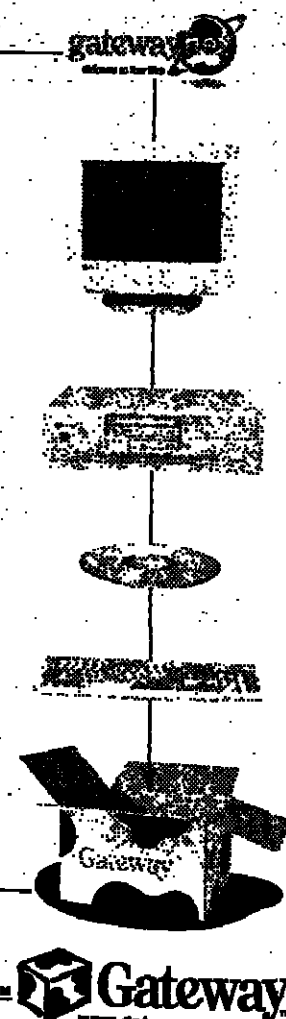
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Gym-shy girls tempted with fun and games

THE era of the schoolgirl "radiator-bugger", who fights shy of games supervised by aggressive, jolly-hockey-sticks teachers on freezing pitches, could soon be a thing of the past.

Schools are being advised to tempt girls into school sports with aerobics, private shower cubicles and the promise of discos with male athletes.

The move is part of the Government-backed Girls in Sport Partnership scheme, which arose from research showing that four out of ten girls drop out of sport by the age of 14, twice as many as boys. The research was carried out by the Youth Sport Trust, which is sponsoring the project with Nike, because it has been proved that playing sport increases girls' confidence and makes them less likely to have eating disorders and unplanned pregnancies, or to leave school early.

"We're obviously very concerned," said Tony Banks, the Sports Minister, at the project launch at the Arsenal football ground in North London. "Decisive action must be taken to stop the falling numbers of girls in sport."

The new approach is based on a survey, conducted by Loughborough University, of attitudes to PE among 3,000 children aged 11 to 14. While boys were generally enthusias-

Schools advised to kick old ways into touch to bring girls back into sport, writes Helen Rumbelow

tic about sport, especially football, girls had a long list of complaints. This did not make them lazy or weedy, the trust said, but showed that schools had been ignoring how different girls were from boys.

"We know what we have to do to keep women in sport," David Kirk, Professor of Youth Sport at Loughborough, said. "Girls are much more likely to be motivated by fun, rather than winning at competitive games. Even simple things, like that old horror of waiting to be picked for teams: we can't do that sort of thing any more."

The traditional double hockey or compulsory cross-country run is out of favour because girls resent structured or forced activities. They should be replaced by self-defence, dance, aerobics and alternative sports such as football and softball.

The mottled thighs of girls

huddling for warmth or a cigarette at the end of the pitch should be a thing of the past: schools are being advised to offer indoor alternatives on cold days.

Baggy gym knickers and unfattering pleated skirts should be replaced by trendier — and warmer — tracksuits, which the girls can keep in a "sports wardrobe" at school. The bulldog of a games mistress belaying instructions from the sidelines should now live on only in older women's nightmares, Professor Kirk said. "Girls want to play with their friends in a friendly atmosphere, so, if you make a mistake, no one yells at you."

The reforms are being tested in a pilot scheme at 52 schools across the country. The researchers will return in the summer term to monitor girls' reactions.



Sport for all: netball in the sunshine at Langdon School in East Ham, London, yesterday

Dead rats save grouse chicks from predators

BY MAGNUS LINKLATER

AN EXPERIMENT designed to prevent hen harriers from preying on grouse by feeding them dead rats has been hailed a success after a one-year trial in Scotland.

More than 3,000 white rats were fed to six breeding pairs of harriers, one of Britain's deadliest birds of prey, on the Langholm Moor in Dumfries and Galloway. By placing the rats on perches near the harrier nests, the birds were persuaded to take free food instead of hunting for grouse.

First estimates, announced yesterday by Scottish Natural Heritage and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, suggested that 35 to 40 grouse chicks had been saved for each harrier nest supplied with rats. The inspectors monitoring the nests saw remains of mammals other than rats, but no grouse remains.

The total costs of the exercise was estimated at £750 per nest per year, but SNH suggested that the saving in live grouse might amount to £800 a nest. The results have per-

sued them to continue the experiment for another year.

Magnus Magnusson, the SNH chairman, said that many landowners would like to try the technique, and that SNH had produced a booklet describing the experiment in the hope that they would use rats rather than illegally killing or scaring off harriers.

The results were greeted cautiously by Maurice Hankey, the director of the Scottish Landowners Federation. Although he welcomed the results, he said that one year was too short a time for valid conclusions to be reached. He gave a warning that, if harrier numbers were allowed to grow too high, commercial grouse shooting could be wiped out.

Dick Potts, of the Game Conservancy Trust, one of the partners in the experiment, said that "diversionary feeding" would not work unless harrier numbers were controlled by other means.

"On its own, it would increase the number of harriers and so exacerbate the problem," he said.

Playgroups get £500,000 grant

By TIM MILES

THE Government yesterday threw a £500,000 lifeline to voluntary playgroups but campaigners gave a warning that hundreds more face closure.

Margaret Hodge, the Child-care Minister, also announced an independent review of the future of playgroups as the Government expands pre-school provision to three-year-olds.

The emergency grant is the second in as many years to voluntary pre-schools, which campaigners claim are being squeezed by the expansion of primary school reception classes and local authority nurseries.

The Pre-School Learning Alliance says that 1,500 playgroups closed during the past two years because four-year-olds were starting primary school earlier.

Margaret Lochrie, the PLA's

chief executive, predicted that 1,700 of the remaining 17,500 would close this year as three-year-olds took up places in local authority nurseries.

The Government disputes the PLA figures and maintains that only 100 playgroups have closed and that others have opened. But Ms Hodge acknowledged the PLA's concerns, and announced an independent review, to report by August, into "how pre-schools and playgroups can play a part in delivering early education and childcare, as we expand both".

Ms Hodge said that playgroups may have to adapt to meet the needs of parents.

"Our research shows the vast majority of pre-schools are willing and considering changes to their services or hours to meet parents' needs," she said. PA News

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Childcare cash help extended to over-7s

CHILDREAR subsidies unveiled in the Budget are to be extended to children aged over 7 in a drive to bolster family life while helping more parents to get back to work.

Gordon Brown said yesterday that millions more parents would now benefit from the new childcare tax credit, which is worth up to £105 a week. It will also mean that childcare for 8 to 14-year-olds will be regulated for the first time in Britain.

In an interview with *The Times*, Mr Brown said childcare could no longer be considered just as part of social policy and an optional add-on for politicians. "Under previous governments matters like childcare were peripheral. We are saying that this is not just a social issue, it is an economic issue and it has moved to the centre of this Government's thinking. When you think of re-

Brown says millions of families will benefit from his expansion of new tax credit, reports Alexandra Frean

moving the barriers to the discrimination against women in employment, the issue of childcare is absolutely central," he said.

The Chancellor has been a driving force behind the Government's National Childcare Strategy. Tonight he will attend a reception organised by the Kids Club Network, which represents more than 4,000 school childcare projects, as part of its annual conference.

More than £8 billion of public money has already been earmarked for childcare services, including the provision of up to one million out-of-school places over three years, the training of new staff and finan-

cial support for parents. Some 60,000 new childcare places have been created this year alone. According to a study by the Kids Club Network, childcare provision is on course to increase by more than 400 per cent by 2003.

More money is expected to flow into the sector as the new tax credit takes off. Some £200 million has been set aside in its first year. The credit will be worth up to £70 a week for families with one child, and £105 where there are two or more children. It will be available from October for parents with a joint income of up to £30,000, and will be paid on a sliding scale.

Mr Brown said that regulating childcare for the over-7s would ensure that the new tax credit was made available to millions more parents than originally planned. This is because it applies only to registered forms of childcare, and until now out-of-school clubs and holiday schemes for those aged 8 or over have been exempt from regulation.

Childcare organisations catering for 8 to 14 year olds will be able to apply for accreditation with regular inspection by government-approved agencies, such as the Kids Club Network. "This measure will enable parents wanting to

take advantage of the childcare tax credit to use breakfast clubs, after-school and holiday clubs, that are run by a school or that use school premises," Mr Brown said.

He also disclosed that the Government is to set up a national telephone helpline and a series of linked Internet sites giving parents details about registered childcare places in their area and information about claiming the tax credit.

The Chancellor added that he hoped to persuade more employers of the economic benefits of providing childcare. "The experience of America is that employers who are prepared to provide childcare have a workforce that is more productive, more likely to stay longer and be loyal to the company. It is good economic sense. It is common sense."

However, he stressed that he was not trying to browbeat parents, but to give them more choices. "I am not trying to tempt more parents into work. I am saying to people, look we understand that the costs of childcare are very high and that there is a gap in childcare places and we understand — especially after all these well-publicised incidents (of child abuse) — that people need to be satisfied about the quality and training of carers."

"What we are doing here for childcare is a breakthrough for Britain and a chance for everybody to feel that they now have opportunities that they did not have before," he added.



Gordon Brown yesterday said that he wanted to give parents more choices

Labour softens stance on lorry tax

By Philip Webster
POLITICAL EDITOR

TONY BLAIR hinted yesterday that the Government will look at ways of softening the impact of the Budget on the road haulage industry.

He has asked ministers to meet representatives of the industry which has claimed that transport taxation policies could cost 50,000 jobs over three years. A number of business leaders wrote to *The Times* on Monday protesting at the impact of the increases in diesel duty and taxes on the largest commercial vehicles.

The *Times* also disclosed that big haulage firms were seriously considering moving parts of their fleets abroad to take advantage of cheaper running costs.

In the Commons yesterday William Hague accused Gordon Brown of neglecting to mention the 12 per cent increase in diesel duty in a "misleading presentation of a dishonest Budget". Mr Blair defended the rise but said he was aware of industry concerns. "I certainly understand the problems of the road haulage industry," he said.

Steve Norris, the Road Haulage Association chief, has been invited to meet John Reid, the Transport Minister.

The industry is pressing for a special fuel duty rebate scheme for trucks of 32 tonnes and over, those worst affected by the taxation increases.

Letters, page 25

£500,000 FOR PLAYGROUPS

The Government gave £500,000 to bail out playgroups yesterday, amid warnings that 100,000 childcare places are under threat (Hannah Betts writes). This is the second emergency grant to voluntary pre-schools, which campaigners claim are being badly hit by the expansion of primary school reception classes and local authority nurseries. The Pre-School Learning Alliance claims that 1,500

playgroups have closed in the last two years, as a consequence of four year olds beginning primary school earlier. Margaret Lochrie, its chief executive, predicted that 1,700 more — out of a total 17,500 — would close this year, as three year olds began to take up places in local authority nurseries.

The extra funding is intended to tide playgroups over until the new childcare tax credit comes in this October.

Benn and Major dream ticket gives Blair a headache

Tony Benn and John Major, the dream ticket. Readers of the Commons Order Paper must have blinked yesterday to see the former Prime Minister's name after Mr Benn's in a list of otherwise hard-left Labour MPs on a motion.

And, at Prime Minister's Questions, William Hague took up their campaign as if it were his own. But this is less a new political alignment than the welcome, though chance, broadening of the debate over the balance between the executive and the legislature.

The issue producing this unlik-

ely alliance is the appointment of the two British members of the European Commission. The Benn/Major/Hague group argues that they should be approved by the Commons before their formal appointment.

This is now politically attractive, given the arguments about the Commission's lack of democratic accountability. But there was more than a touch of opportunism about Mr Hague's involvement, since as a somewhat bemused and reluctant Tony Blair pointed out, the Tory leader had not made the suggestion in his letter about the next

Tory nominee before this week's row erupted.

There is an important constitutional, as well as political, point here. At present, Prime Ministers make appointments to a wide range of posts: bishops, judges, ambassadors, royal commissions, chairmen of public bodies, as well as ministers and peers. These executive prerogatives, still nominally announced in the name of the Queen, can be exercised without a vote in Parliament.

Mr Benn has for long campaigned to make such prime ministerial patronage, as well as other ex-



Peter Riddell
ON POLITICS

ecutive powers such as signing treaties and declaring war, subject to the approval of the Commons. As I discussed last Friday, he has just produced a Bill, his third on the issue, with cross-party backing, including from David Davis, the former Tory minister and chairman of the Public Accounts Select

Committee. Governments would still make nominations, but the Commons would have to give its approval.

This proposal would strengthen the accountability of the executive to the legislature, particularly now that many important public jobs are exercised at arms length from ministers themselves — by the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee, by utility regulators and by European commissioners.

The counterview is that quality people will not put themselves for-

ward if they are subject to the intrusive scrutiny which some nominees face under the American Senate's confirmation system. These fears can partly be answered by having tight rules both on the length of the process and by limiting the issues that can be raised to their professional suitability for the post in question.

Others argue that the Commons would somehow become committed to the nominees, and unable to scrutinise them subsequently, if MPs were involved in the appointment process. That certainly does not happen in the United States.

The main objection is that Prime Ministers never want to limit their patronage. Ministers squashed a proposal by the Treasury Select Committee for formal confirmation of members of the Monetary Policy Committee, though Giles Radice, its chairman, has introduced post-appointment hearings.

Mr Hague's advocacy of the idea has made it much less likely that Mr Blair will agree. But an enterprising committee chairman should hold a quick inquiry, if only to force the government to come up with a full explanation for its defence of patronage.

Islands must drop anti-gay legislation

By Roland Watson
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

BRITAIN'S outposts will have to repeal anti-homosexual laws and tighten up financial rules for their inhabitants to receive full British citizenship, Robin Cook said yesterday. The changes will be required by the Government as part of the deal which will see all 150,000 people living in the 13 dependent territories given British passports.

It will allow those living in the islands the right to move to Britain, although Mr Cook said he did not expect a mass influx because 70 per cent of them enjoyed a higher per capita income than UK residents.

The requirement for territories to decriminalise consensual homosexual acts in private, in line with the UK Sexual Offences Act 1967, is aimed at the five Caribbean territories of Anguilla, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Montserrat and Turks and Caicos Islands.

The British Virgin Islands and Bermuda will also have to repeal the rights of their courts to pass sentences of corporal punishment. And Bermuda will have to renounce the death penalty for murder.

Mr Cook said the changes were necessary to ensure the territories abided by the same standards as Britain and did not fall short of the European Convention on Human Rights. He also warned the Cayman Islands and the British Virgin Islands that they had until the end of the year to meet international standards on money-laundering and the transparency of their financial systems, including co-operating with law enforcement authorities.

The details are contained in a White Paper unveiled by Mr Cook yesterday, titled *Partnership for Progress and Prosperity*. It includes the provision that the territories will in future drop the "dependent" in their titles and be called UK overseas territories.

Leading article, page 25

Cook slur may go to police

THE police could be called in to investigate the attempted smear of Robin Cook by linking him with a dossier of confidential information about a Labour MP (Roland Watson writes). The Prime Minister indicated yesterday that Jack Straw, the Home

Secretary, might order an investigation once he had looked at the documents which purported to show that the Foreign Secretary had ordered a tawdry of the private life of Diane Abbott, the MP for Hackney North and Stoke Newington. Mr

Blair said the papers were an "obvious, amateurish fake" but their surfacing was "no trivial matter". The papers appeared to contain details from Home Office records on Ms Abbott's time as a civil servant, and a stolen file of hers.

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مكتبة النهر

Doctors bury lens in cheek to save sight

By Nigel Hawkes
SCIENCE EDITOR

DOCTORS yesterday implanted an artificial cornea into the cheek of a 75-year-old man in an attempt to restore his sight. In six weeks the plastic lens will be removed, together with the human cells that have grown around it, and used to replace the damaged cornea in one of his eyes.

Cecil Creed damaged his eyes in a chemical accident when a child. He lost the sight in one, while the other has had three corneal transplants, all of which worked for a while before failing.

The latest technique for replacing a cornea — the clear front part of the eye, which covers the coloured iris and focuses light on the retina — has been developed in Italy by Stephano Piniucci, who was at Queens Medical Centre in Nottingham, to demonstrate it to Professor Harmander Dua.

It is believed to be the first time this particular technique has been used in Britain, although similar operations, using teeth to form the support



Stephano Piniucci with his revolutionary lens

for the artificial lens, have been conducted elsewhere.

During the two-hour operation two plastic lenses, each with a collar of fabric around it, were buried in the skin of Mr Creed's cheek. During the six weeks they are expected to stay there, cells will grow around them, filling the fabric — Dacron, a strong, non-allergenic polyester fabric used in sofas and yacht sails — with a colony of Mr Creed's own cells.

Professor Dua said that the

lenses will be removed from the cheek when fully colonised with cells. "We then bore a hole in the centre of Mr Creed's eye to fit the lens," he said.

The collar of fabric then grows into the surrounding eye naturally and is not rejected. "Because the cells have come from the host this method allows us to heal the plastic lens with living tissue."

Professor Dua also took some material, the mucous membrane, from inside Mr Creed's upper lip, and stitched it into place on the surface of his right eye.

"The operation went as planned and it is hoped that in two months the mucous membrane will fuse with the front of Mr Creed's eye and provide sufficient bulk and thickness to the front of the eye to hold the prosthesis in place," he

said. By that time both the devices should be colonised by his cells. One will be used, while the other left in place as a spare for many years.

While there are risks involved in the operation, Mr Creed has little to lose — without the operation he will never see again. "I know this is my last chance," he said.

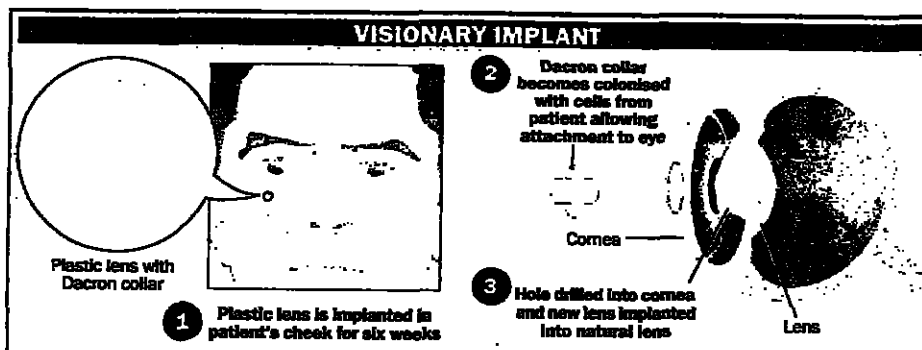
Corneal transplants are common, and very successful. They are used after the cornea has been damaged by infec-

tion or injury. Up to 30 per cent may be rejected, in which case a second transplant may be tried. In Mr Creed's case, repeated failure of transplants left no choice but to go for an entirely artificial lens.

Speaking from her home in Moreton, The Wirral, Mr Creed's wife, Norma, 80, said: "He's been going backwards and forwards to hospital for years. It will be wonderful if he gets his sight back. He will be thrilled to the skies."



Markings on Cecil Creed's face indicate where the lenses will be buried, and the eye that will be covered with a membrane from his upper lip



Piniucci and Dua: the operation went as planned

Ancient crocodiles grew to be giants

THE giant crocodiles that once preyed on dinosaurs just grew and grew. American scientists have discovered.

Deinosuchus was four times as big as any modern crocodile, growing to lengths of up to 33ft and weighing as much as five tonnes. Scientists had been puzzled by the fact that it grew to such a size, given that it did not share the dinosaurs' high metabolic rate.

Gregory Erickson, of the University of California at Berkeley, and Christopher

Brochu, of the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago, compared the number of growth rings in the bones of *Deinosuchus* specimens to the length of the bones to estimate a growth rate.

They conclude in *Nature* that the creatures, which lived about 100 million years ago, grew slowly, taking about 35 years to reach their maximum size. They lived for about 50 years. Dinosaurs reached similar sizes in seven or eight years.



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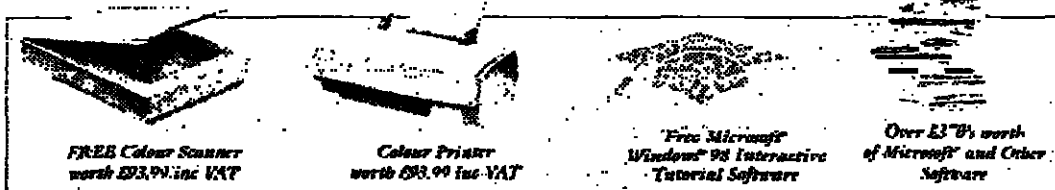
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Waitrose and Co-op join the GM backlash

By Nick Nuttall
ENVIRONMENT
CORRESPONDENT

WAITROSE and the Co-op joined the supermarket revolt against genetically modified foods yesterday, promising to make their own-label brands "GM free".

The pledges, which came after Sainsbury's and Marks & Spencer announced a Europe-wide scheme to phase out foods containing ingredients and additives produced from gene-altered crops, will cause concern for the biotechnology companies championing genetic modification.

But supermarket chains that have not banished GM foods from their shelves expressed doubt yesterday about the promises of their competitors, saying it would be difficult to identify all such products.

Waitrose, which has 117 branches, said that none of its own-label products, including pet food, would contain GM soya or maize by the end of the month. A spokesman said the chain hoped that its own-label foods would be free from flour, emulsifiers and other additives derived from gene-altered crops by next year. The

THE PIONEERS

Farmers used selective breeding in Central America more than 7,000 years ago to achieve a feat of genetic engineering unmatched by today's biotechnologists. A report in *Nature* says a wild grass, teosinte, was changed into maize. The two were thought to be entirely separate, before DNA analysis led by John Doebley, from the University of Minnesota,

and Sainsbury's are still committed to own-brand foods with gene-altered ingredients. Each emphasised yesterday the need to offer choice, backed by explicit labelling.

Privately they were questioning whether their rivals could provide genuinely GM-free foods. A Sainsbury's spokesman said that, because soya from the United States was a mixture, it was impossible to guarantee that foods containing it were GM-free.

Sainsbury's said that it believed there were "tangible benefits" from some gene-altered products, including lower prices. Tesco said: "We have no plans to change our policy."

Sainsbury's and Marks & Spencer have joined chains in France, Ireland, Switzerland, Belgium and Italy to source crops destined for processing into own-label foods that are certified GM-free.

Sainsbury's said the collective buying power would enable them to negotiate a deal that guaranteed GM-free soya and maize. "We have been working on this for 18 months. Our own-brand labels will be free from GM ingredients, additives and derivatives by summer," a spokesman said.

Co-op, Britain's third-largest chain, said it had asked suppliers of its own-label food to use ingredients and additives from non-GM sources.

Asda, one of the first stores to begin phasing out own-label food with GM ingredients, said yesterday that the switch would be completed within three months. It has asked the big importers of soya and maize to seek crops free from genetic modification. The store said that the ban included ingredients and additives derived from gene-altered crops. Sainsbury's, Tesco

Alternatives 'hard to find'

By Our Environment Correspondent

THE ability of stores to stock GM-free, own-label brands was brought into question last night because of the difficulties in finding soya supplies that are 100 per cent GM-free.

They hope to reformulate many foods to replace genetically altered soya with alternatives such as rapeseed oil and wheat-based products, but some foods using soya meal and protein, including vegetarian dishes, are far more difficult to reformulate. So the stores are turning to Brazil and Canada, where it is claimed that there are good supplies of non-gene-altered soya beans.

However, field-state trials of gene-altered soya are being

carried out in Brazil and it is likely that some is entering shipments, a source in the crop-importing industry said.

Brazil also imports large quantities of American soya towards the end of the Brazilian harvest to make up consignments to Europe and elsewhere. About 40 per cent of the American crop is genetically modified. Canada's production of GM-free soya is relatively small and much of this has already been signed up by the health food industry.

"So to say that shipments from Brazil are GM-free is probably utter nonsense," the source said. "It may be a few of the beans are gene-modified or it could be much more, you

just cannot tell." Conventional maize, the other big crop which is being gene-altered commercially, should prove far easier to source. It is grown in Europe and only 6,000 to 15,000 tonnes of gene-altered crop is in circulation. French farmers are now refusing to grow gene-altered maize amid fears that consumers in Europe will reject the crop.

Sainsbury's rejected suggestions it could not guarantee GM-free own-label foods. A spokesman said the store had set up an "audit trail" back to South America, which means it can know everything about the seeds used and the fate of the consignments, from shipping to processing.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Dome free for 10,000 children

A million children from 10,000 schools will be able to visit the Millennium Dome free, the Prime Minister announced. On every schoolday next year, more than 5,000 pupils are expected to visit the Dome in Greenwich for a four-hour tour.

Four draws will be held to allocate tickets. All schools will be able to apply for up to 100 tickets for children aged 8 to 16.

Jennie Page, chief executive of the New Millennium Experience Company, said: "The Dome will be the greatest concentration of entertainment, inspiration and education under one roof. A third of schools will be able to bring children with free admission." Details will be sent to schools in June.

Rapist captured

Andrew Crisp, a rapist who escaped from Lincoln prison last week, has been recaptured in North London. Jamie Lewis, 24, from Lincoln, is to appear at the city's magistrates court today, accused of helping Crisp, 36, to escape.

Library reopens

A partial reopening of the reading rooms at St Pancras will be announced by the British Library today, even if a strike by book delivery staff continues. Management and union officials are scheduled to meet tomorrow.

Officer charged

A police officer has been charged with neglect of duty after the death of Geoffrey Lee, 27, in a car at Preston police station last year. The Lancashire officer is expected to appear before magistrates in the town today.

Firemen held

Five firemen were arrested by police in Bolton over allegations that they made bogus 999 calls and started fires to increase their earnings. The men all worked as part of a retained, or part-time, crew based at Horwich fire station.

Author in plea to restrict Shakespeare

By Dalya Alberge
ARTS CORRESPONDENT



Smith: owes more to mother and Buchan

THE adventure writer Wilbur Smith said yesterday that children should not be made to study Shakespeare too early or his plays would switch off young minds.

The millionaire author, whose books have sold more than 100 million copies worldwide, said that the Bard should be saved for students who were able to appreciate the works. Speaking at a book-signing in Birmingham to promote his latest novel, *Monsoon*, Smith said: "At 11 and 12, when I was introduced to Shakespeare, I hated the experience. I was beaten across the knuckles and backside if I got it wrong."

"It's like being taught Chaucer at 12. You've been taught one English language, and now you're being introduced to another. I didn't enjoy Shakespeare until I was 16. It was only when I saw Olivier making sense of the whole language that I came to love it."

Smith believes it was through the stories of John Buchan and others that he "came to love the English language". Remembering how his mother read bedtime stories to him as a child, he expressed dismay that children today tended to rely on television, with programmes such as *Barney* and the *Teletub-*

bies: "I developed a reverence and love for the written word before I could read."

Smith was born in Central Africa in 1933 and now lives in Cape Town. He has written 26 novels, beginning with *When The Lion Feeds*.

Later Peter Holland, the director of the Shakespeare Institute at the University of Birmingham, said: "Teachers now do not make children wade through Shakespeare. They make him come alive by acting. Watching Shakespeare is not a turn-off. Look at the audiences excited by *Shakespeare in Love*."

Ronnie Mulryne, from Warwick University's English department, said: "Shakespeare is a part of our culture and is central to the way we speak today."

Justice prevails over the millennium bug

THE justice system would not be affected by Millennium Bug, the Lord Chancellor said yesterday.

Lord Irvine of Lairg said that work on Year 2000 compliance was well advanced, and that almost 90 per cent of vital systems in his department would comply and by the end of April.

The Lord Chancellor's Department, which is responsible for courts throughout the

country, as well as the Land Registry, Public Records Office and the Northern Ireland Court Service, commissioned consultants to ensure that all its computer systems were safe. They concluded that the department had "secured itself from Year 2000 threats and that its customers, suppliers and other partners in the justice system can depend on its services and operations continuing undisturbed."

هكذا من الذلل



The Roberts family, left, have invested £250,000 in relocating their home near Beachy Head, East Sussex, to a site where it should be safe for the next 50 years. Their plans were brought forward by a 50,000-tonne cliff fall last November

When moving house can be a cliffhanger

Richard Duce watches as a lighthouse family's home is shifted 55ft to save it from tumbling into the English Channel

FOR Mark and Louise Roberts it was the ultimate house-moving nightmare. They had to travel only 55ft — but they were taking their entire home with them.

Home for Mr and Mrs Roberts is the 150-year-old Belle Tout lighthouse, which stood perilously close to the cliff edge on the Sussex chalk downs near Beachy Head. So, with nature issuing a move or lose ultimatum, the couple embarked on an engineering feat, financed by a £250,000 bank loan, to relocate the building to a site where it should be

safe from the sea for the next 50 years.

On a hazy spring day overlooking the English Channel, Mr Roberts, 34, watched yesterday as his home inched almost imperceptibly away from the edge of the 285ft cliff.

"It reminds me of when my wife was in labour," he said. "There were all these people tending to her needs and there was nothing I could do to help. It reminds me of the agony of waiting to know if everything is going to be all right."

Such a short move takes 17 men,



Brett Bowen greases the tracks on which the lighthouse was moved

a battery of hydraulic jacks, specially greased rails and a computer to monitor every millimetre of movement. The specialist contractors Abbey Pynford had performed a similar task when they moved the chapel at Great Ormond Street hospital.

Mr and Mrs Roberts run a leisure company and have a 13-month-old daughter, Haven,

and a six-week-old baby boy, Quinn. They became a lighthouse family when they took a lease on the disused building from Eastbourne council two years ago.

While they knew there would eventually be a need for action, the moving plans were brought forward by a 50,000-tonne cliff fall that left the lighthouse 25ft closer to the sea.

"It was a November morning last year and there was a big rumbling noise like thunder," Mrs Roberts, 30, said. "Mike grabbed the baby and the dog and we jumped into the car. We got to the bottom of the drive, from where you can't see the house, but we did see a massive cloud of dust, so we knew that the cliff had fallen. When we came back we didn't know if there would

be half a lighthouse or no lighthouse at all."

The 55ft granite-clad tower was intact, but only 10ft from the sea and contractors have spent the past three months digging through chalk to underpin the building with jacks. Reinforced beams were then cast under the loadbearing walls.

Four hydraulic jacks were used to push the building backwards from the sea along specially greased rails to its new home above a recently built extension.

Sightseers from Eastbourne joined reporters and television crews yesterday to see the thing move. And so it did at 9.40am, for the best part of 2ft, before it stopped again. Apparently some chalk had fallen away from the cliff, but, after rigorous checks proved all was

safe, movement started again at lunchtime. Paul Kiss, managing director of Abbey Pynford, was optimistic that the lighthouse would be in place by early evening.

Proceedings were not helped by the brief evacuation of the site for a bomb scare. It eventually transpired that an unexploded device had been found further along the cliffs, where Canadian troops had practised shelling during the Second World War.

The lighthouse has mains electricity and water pumped from an underground well and the heating is run on solid fuel.

The underpinning will remain beneath the lighthouse after the operation is complete for the near-inevitable need for another move in 50 years' time.

Garlic gives piglet taste of mother

BY NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

PIGS whose food is spiked with garlic could help their piglets through the trauma of weaning, according to a scientist.

The familiar taste of garlic, acquired through their mothers' milk, would help piglets to eat solid food, as long as it had the same strong taste.

Jon Day, of the ADAS agricultural research centre near King's Lynn, Norfolk, has evidence that the technique works in rats, and is now looking for funding to try it with pigs. He says that piglets are

taken from their mothers at three weeks and put straight on to solid food. Some take as long as a week to start eating it. "A lot suffer, and their growth is set back, which means a loss to the farmer."

At next week's meeting of the British Society for Animal Science in Scarborough, he will present the results of the rat studies. These show that rat pups whose mothers ate garlic or cumin in their diet were more inclined to eat foods containing these flavours after weaning. "The battle is to get them to stick their noses in and take a bite," he told New Scientist. In

the wild, piglets are weaned more slowly, gradually adapting to solid food by mixing it with feeds from their mothers. But in pig farms, the process is abrupt. Piglets are taken away from their mothers so that they can produce another litter.

Dr Day says the pork finally produced will not taste of garlic. By the time they reach a marketable weight of 80-100 kilograms, at the age of 18-21 weeks, pigs will have been fed on a range of foods, and the effect of the garlic-flavoured variety used for the awkward weaning period will have worn off.

Yorkshire feta casts off EU fetters

BY ELIZABETH JUDGE

A YORKSHIRE woman was given the go-ahead yesterday to continue selling feta cheese when a European court ruled that the name should not be exclusive to Greek dairies.

It was a "victory for common sense", said Judy Bell, who received more than a hundred letters of support when her battle was reported last year. Feta had been added to

the list of protected names produced by the European Commission after a request by Greek cheesemakers.

Yesterday the European Court of Justice agreed with Danish, French and German cheesemakers that they had "unjustly" been stopped from using the name. Feta will now join Eccles cakes and Bath buns as a product that can be sold outside its place of origin.

Mrs Bell, who produces feta from a family-run farm in North Yorkshire, said she was delighted with the ruling. She added: "I had been told by the Ministry of Agriculture that I would not be able to sell my cheese after 2001. Now I will be going full steam ahead."

Mrs Bell's company, Shepherd's Purse Cheese, has been producing the handmade cheese for 23 years. It has won a British Cheese Award and is sold by Tesco and many small-

er shops. She said that, when she first heard from the ministry of the objections, she thought it was a joke. "Even Greek tourists at a table told me it was as good as any they had tasted in Greece."

She said of the public interest in her case: "I have had letters from people telling me to play around with the lettering and rename it 'Efta'. One person suggested I should call it 'I can't believe it's not feta'."

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Britain pays homage to Catalonia's style

Our top architects have given their annual prize not to a person, but to a city, reports Marcus Binney

THE Royal Institute of British Architects has broken with 150 years of tradition and given its annual gold medal not to an architect, but to the city of Barcelona.

The medal, which is the world's most highly prized architectural award, has been granted to almost all the great architects of the 20th century, including Frank Lloyd Wright, Le Corbusier, Alvaro Siza and, more recently, to Sir Norman Foster, Lord Rogers of Riverside and Sir Michael Hopkins. This year the jury deemed that the regeneration of Barcelona in the two decades since the restoration of democracy provided such a shining example to other cities, especially London, that it decided to honour the city, its government, its residents and its design professionals.

Five Barcelona citizens will

travel to London to receive the medal. They are Narcís Serra, Barcelona's first mayor after the fall of Franco; Pasquell Maragall, elected mayor four times between 1983 and 1995, and the current mayor Joan Clos. With them will be two architects, Oriol Bohigas, who masterminded the Olympic village in 1992, and Josep Acbillo.

Señor Bohigas said: "It is very important that British architects have given this award not just to fellow architects but to politicians and mayors who have the power to transform cities and are the real authors of change."

Architectural links between Britain and Barcelona are growing rapidly. The Catalan Enric Miralles recently won the competition for the new Scottish Parliament, and in Barcelona the Scottish archi-



Señor Serra will travel to London for the award

tect David Mackay has been a partner of Martorell Bohigas Mackay since 1962. The firm, runner-up in the competition for the Millennium Village in Greenwich, was recently chosen to plan a new quarter in the London borough of Newham and is also designing a thoroughfare in Cardiff to link the city's centre with its harbour. They are now favourites to design the South Bank arts complex.

Peter Hodgkinson, a British

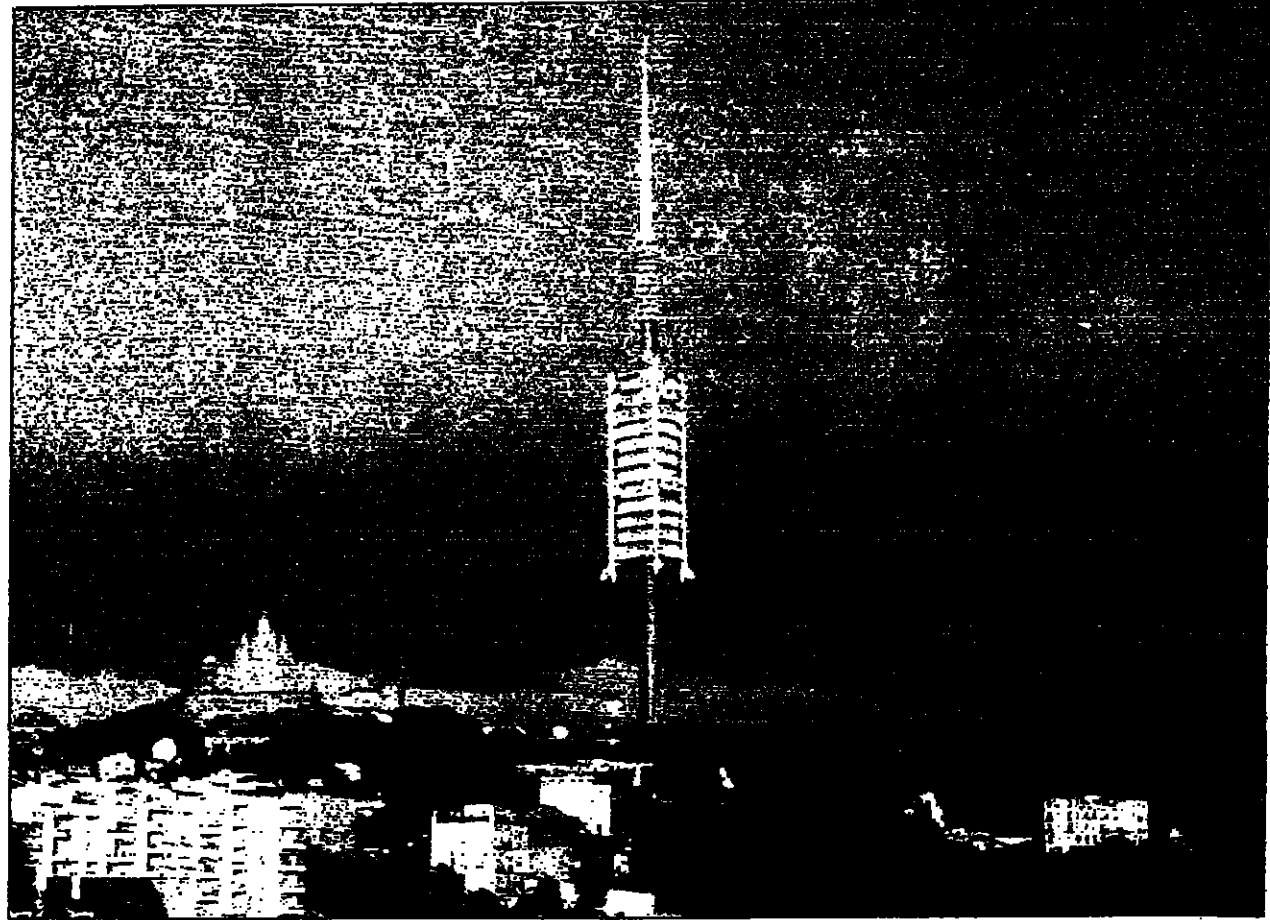
architect who helped to establish the renowned studio in Barcelona with Ricardo Bofill, said: "I came here 33 years ago and fell in love with the country, the food and the wine."

"Architects are much freer here. There's no dominant international style. Better still, architecture is not so developed. As designers, we have a much greater control of projects from design to completion."

"We begin at ten in the morning and continue until ten at night, breaking for two hours at lunch. Dinner begins at 11 and the nightlife at one o'clock. There's snow in the Pyrenees, miles of glorious beaches, and I have a farm in the hills with a vineyard."

Mr Hodgkinson was the architect of Barcelona's spacious airport terminal, and the practice also designed the Catalan National Theatre in the form of a giant glass classical temple.

The gold medal recognises not just landmark projects in Barcelona — such as the Olympic Stadium, the new modern



Sir Norman Foster's telecommunications tower in Barcelona. The city has been held up as a shining example of design

arts museum and the restored opera house — but many smaller projects, such as the remarkable series of "pocket parks" threaded across the city on formerly industrial land,

sometimes retaining factory walls to create secluded and shaded garden rooms. Having sided with the Communists in the Spanish Civil War, Barcelona was starved of

investment under Franco, and decades of dictatorship left the city's historic fabric largely intact. Since the death of Franco, regeneration of old quarters, as well as of many famous buildings by the great Art Nouveau architect Gaudí, has gone hand-in-hand with imaginative work on derelict and empty sites and along the waterfront.

The one major building in Barcelona by a British architect is the highly acclaimed telecommunications tower by Foster and Partners in the hills behind the city, a commission won against fierce competition

from the leading Spanish architect Santiago Calatrava.

The royal gold medal for the promotion of architecture was inaugurated by Queen Victoria in 1848 and is conferred by the Sovereign on a person "whose work has promoted, either directly or indirectly, the advancement of architecture". The jury is nominated and chaired by David Rock, president of the royal institute, and this year consisted of Peter Carolin, Sir Norman Foster, Sir Michael Hopkins, Ian Latham, Stuart Lipton, Amanda Levete and Robert Maxwell.

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Olympic leap into the hearts of tourists

By SUSIE STEINER

TEN years ago it did not even make it into the top ten. Then, in 1992, Barcelona hosted the Olympic Games and this year the city has replaced Vienna as No 4 in the list of Britons' favourite city destinations.

Spain's second city is now spun by travel companies as the chic destination of the Nineties. "It is regarded as hip and cool and has a great nightlife," enthused a spokesman for Thomson, Britain's biggest tour operator.

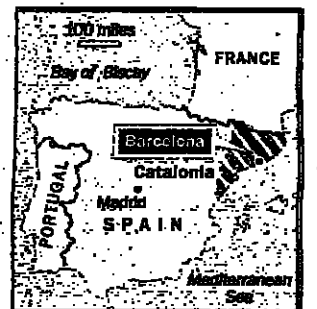
However, according to Robert Elms, a writer who lived in Barcelona during its Olympic transformation, its change into a big-league resort has not all been for the good. "It has become very shiny and polished and cosmopolitan. It's a great European city now, but it used to be a wonderful Spanish one," he said. "The Olympics brought all the multinationals in, like McDonald's. Barcelona spent an absolute fortune on itself, very wisely, beautifying and taming itself up."

"In 1981 you could count the tourists on one hand — they just didn't go there. Now you can't walk down the Ramblas and, if you do, you pay £5 for a coffee. The Olympics announced it to the world."

To feed the new British thirst for Catalonia, flights there have multiplied. In 1996 a total of 401,000 aircraft took tourists to Barcelona. In 1998 the figure was 548,000 — an increase of nearly 150,000.

Thomson Breakaway Cities is currently selling five times the number of holidays it was selling in 1994. "It does astonishingly well," the company's spokesman said. "Madrid is only No 10 for city breaks."

The Catalan capital, with a population of 1.5 million, gets more British visitors than the Venice, New York, Prague, Dublin and Madrid.



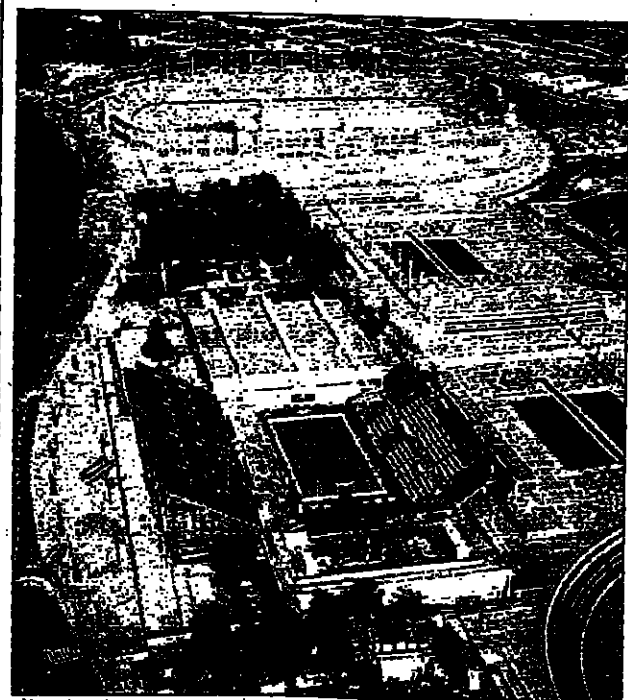
said: "After the Olympics, the city was put on the map. From that moment, we have been a successful tourist city."

Barcelona has long been a cultural haven, synonymous with the architect Gaudí, whose unfinished Temple de la Sagrada Família (Temple of the Holy Family) draws millions of tourists each year.

Its attractions, including the Picasso Museum, which houses 3,600 of the artist's works, are aided by a temperate climate, easy access to the beach and its bustling main thoroughfare, known as the Ramblas, with its street traders and musicians. "It's very arty," Elms said. "It's the city of Picasso, Gaudí and Miró. It's got great architecture, it's right by the sea and it's got mountains behind — what more could you ask for?"

The British love of Barcelona has been increasingly brought home. Pop music lovers will have been aware of reference to Barcelona in the No 1 hit by the Manic Street Preachers, *If You Tolerate This*, in which they refer to the Ramblas. George Orwell immortalised the region with *Homage to Catalonia* and Whit Stillman's film *Barcelona* followed the romantic exploits of a group of young Americans in the city.

□ The top ten city destinations are Paris, Amsterdam, Rome, Barcelona, Bruges, Venice, New York, Prague, Dublin and Madrid.



Barcelona was rejuvenated by the 1992 Olympic Games

مكتبة النهر

COMMISSION IN CRISIS

Italy presses for Prodi

FROM RICHARD OWEN
IN ROME AND
ROGER BOYES IN BONN

ROMANO PRODI, the former Italian Prime Minister, was emerging yesterday as front-runner in the tussle to be European Commission President.

"It seems an understanding is emerging between Bonn, London and Rome, to the exclusion of Paris," one Italian official said yesterday with barely disguised satisfaction.

The need to find a successor to Jacques Santer is the main focus of shuttle diplomacy gripping Europe's capitals. The merits of rival candidates dominated talks yesterday between Gerhard Schröder, the German Chancellor, and Massimo D'Alema, Italy's Prime Minister — part of the Chancellor's whistle-stop tour of Europe's capitals ahead of next week's European Union summit in Berlin.

There were signs yesterday that Britain and Germany were increasingly keen to back

NEW PRESIDENT

Signor Prodi, a move that threatens to leave the French Government sidelined. Signor Prodi is on good personal terms with Tony Blair, and German sources said that Herr Schröder also enjoys a good relationship with him.

Italians feel aggrieved when Britain, France and Germany are described as Europe's "Big Three". "Rome backs Prodi for Brussels" was the banner headline in yesterday's *Corriere della Sera*.

Signor Prodi, who still has political ambitions in Italy, was "pondering" whether to throw his hat into the ring. But *La Repubblica* noted that the man who, as Prime Minister from April 1996 to October 1998, persuaded Italians to accept austerity measures to qualify for the single currency was in "pole position".

Yesterday Signor D'Alema, who spoke to Mr Blair by telephone on the need for a "quick solution" to the EU's worst in-

stitutional crisis yet, threw his weight behind Signor Prodi's candidacy, saying: "It's now or never. We believe Romano Prodi is the right man for the job."

Signor D'Alema and Signor Prodi have barely been on speaking terms since October, when the Prodi centre-left coalition narrowly lost a parliamentary vote of confidence over the 1999 budget. But the feuding and sniping have been put aside.

Lamberto Dini, the veteran Foreign Minister — he held the post under Signor Prodi, too — said there had "never been any doubt" that he was Italy's choice.

Italian officials said Signor Prodi, 59, met Mr Blair's demand that the new President should be a "real political heavyweight", and was a "photocopy" for Herr Schröder's call for a "committed European with political experience, a knowledge of economics and personal integrity".

Anatole Kaletsky, page 24
Leading article, page 25



Prodi: Britain, Germany and Italy appear to want him to succeed Jacques Santer

Whistle-stop tour gives Schröder few solutions

FROM ROGER BOYES
IN BONN

BERLIN SUMMIT

GERMANY'S presidency of the European Union seems to be skidding out of control a week before a Berlin summit is supposed to overhaul the financing of the group.

Gerhard Schröder, the Chancellor, keenly in need of a foreign policy success, yesterday wound up a whistle-stop tour of European capitals with a convincing solution for the crisis prompted by the collective resignation of the European Commission.

"This is not a crisis, it is an opportunity," he said yesterday, repeating words used last week after the equally surprising resignation of Oskar Lafontaine, his Finance Minister. The sudden departure of Herr Lafontaine, the collapse of the Commission and Herr Schröder's increasingly obvious lack of European experience has created a chaotic prelude to what was billed as a make-or-break European reform summit next week.

"There have been too many suicides," said a German official. "Berlin is becoming a

crisis-management session rather than the orderly reform summit that was planned."

Franco-German ties are at a low point. Southern states, suspicious of attempts to cut agricultural subsidies, detect a German-led conspiracy. Key figures such as Franz Fischler, the Agriculture Commissioner who helped to break the logjam on a farm deal, are now out of play.

Herr Schröder told his counterparts yesterday in Athens and Rome that he had no intention of putting off the Berlin summit. It was more likely that another emergency summit would be held to discuss the future of the Commission.

For now he is concentrating on what he can do best: shuffling names. His advisers say that he is trying to persuade leaders to choose the cream of their political class, rather than the losers of Cabinet wrangles, as candidates for a new Commission. But he has been unable to find a common line on what should now happen to the Commission.

The Professor takes lessons on Blair's Third Way

The emergence of an Italian as the front-runner to head the European Commission after a scandal involving alleged fraud and mismanagement might seem paradoxical, given Italy's past reputation for unstable and less than transparent politics.

But Romano Prodi — affectionately known as *Il Professore* — is widely admired for his honesty and modesty, and his attempts to reform the Italian political system, as well as his achievement in guiding Italy into membership of the euro against the odds.

Almost always unflappable, with a ready smile, Professor Prodi enjoys bicycling, often takes trains and buses instead of official limousines, and (to the detriment of his waistline, though not on the scale of the former German Chancellor, Helmut Kohl), loves the food of his native Bologna, especially Mortadella sausage.

A family man — he and his wife Flavia, a fellow academic, have two sons in their twenties, one of whom has followed his father to the LSE — Signor Prodi is rooted in the Catholicism of Emilia Romagna, and also in its left-wing traditions. He speaks passable English, as well as German and French.

During his time in power, Signor Prodi carved an international reputation which belied his earlier reputation as a mild-mannered provincial professor, taking up Tony Blair's concept of the "Third Way" with enthusiasm. "He got a kick out of being in on the dialogue between Blair and Clinton," one Prodi adviser said. "He likes to feel part of the ideological reshaping of the democratic Left."

Underlying Signor Prodi's approach was, and is, a fierce pride in Italy coupled with an equally unquestioning commitment to European integration, espoused with a passion which will make him an object of close scrutiny by British Eurosceptics if he does become Commission President. He was driven to get Italy inside the euro, he said recently, by "a realisation that Italy could not miss its appointment with history". Doubts about the euro's weakness or its impact on euroland economies still in need of structural reform (including Italy's) are brushed aside.

As for Britain, Signor Prodi has no doubt that "when the time comes Britons will not want to miss the boat. I do not believe the City of London will want to miss out on the opportunities created by monetary union". He is close to Mr Blair, who reportedly finds Signor Prodi and Flavia congenial company. "It is part of the Blairs' love affair with Italy," one Italian official said. Mr Blair and his family have spent the last three summers in Tuscany, and are expected to go there again this summer. The Blairs and the Prodis have become firm friends.

Last summer, in shirt-sleeves and chinos, Mr Blair and Signor Prodi (addressing each other as "my dear friend

Richard Owen on the honest and modest man who could lead Europe

Tony and "Caro Romano" respectively) lunched together in the Italian countryside, happily posing afterwards for photographs "for all the world as if they were English and Italian families who happen to have met up on holiday", as one expert in Tuscany put it. But then Prodi the family man is not a pose: he and his wife have a modest income, and his reputation as a man of integrity and simplicity (they live in a flat in Bologna) has won him respect.

Italy remains permeated by Mediterranean corruption. But Signor Prodi, 59, is one of several figures — Massimo D'Alema, his rival and successor, is another — who embody a change in political culture which began in 1992, when the "Clean Hands" anti-corruption campaign led by Milan magistrates brought about the downfall of the Christian Democrats, who had ruled Italy almost without interruption for nearly half a century.

Out of the ashes arose a new Centre-Right, led by Silvio Berlusconi, the media tycoon, which briefly held power in 1994; and a new Centre-Left, with the ex-Communist Party of the Democratic Left (PDS) at its core. Since neither Italy nor the world was ready for a Government led by ex-Communists, the PDS in 1995 looked for a front man with left-wing views but a solid reputation who could head a centre-left alliance, the Olive Tree.

Such a man was found in Signor Prodi, a bespectacled professor of economics at Bologna University who had studied at the LSE as well as the Catholic University of Milan, and who served as head of IRI, the state holding company, from 1982-89.

Critics said he was a "manager" who lacked political experience, and who was uncomfortable on television. His record at IRI, moreover, was not completely untainted: while nobody suggests he profited personally, an investigation was launched two years ago into alleged "abuse of office" by IRI officials, including Signor Prodi, relating to alleged favouritism during the privatisation of a giant state-owned food conglomerate.

Voters warmed to his homely style, and in the historic April 1996 poll the Olive Tree won a majority. Outsiders used to mocking Italy's frequent "revolving door" governments predicted a short-lived administration.

But the Prodi Government lasted a near-record two and a half years. "Everyone keeps asking me about Europe," Signor Prodi said yesterday "I say, yes — but what about Italy?"

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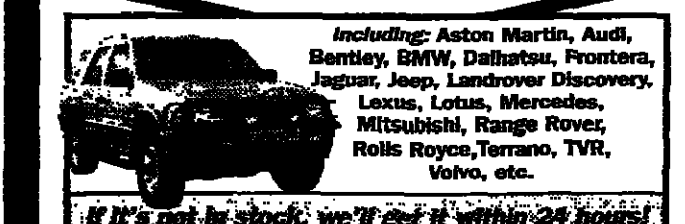
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COMMISSION IN CRISIS



'The fraud report was interfered with between Sunday night and Monday'

This lady's not for burning

EDITH CRESSON responded yesterday, as she has done after almost every chapter of her accident-prone career, by claiming to be the victim of a plot. In an interview, she said that somebody had tampered with the fraud report that led to the European Commission's downfall.

A section of the report concerning the Leonardo training programme, for which she was responsible, "was interfered with between Sunday night and Monday", she told *Le Figaro*. She had seen a draft of the report on Sunday, but found new wording in the final version on the next day.

"Four paragraphs were modified in a way that was unfavourable to myself and untruthful," she said. "Someone wanted to make people believe that I had been warned in advance of the malfunctions and that I wanted to mislead the European Parliament. That is an absolute lie."

Mme Cresson, 65, did not tell *Le Figaro* whom she suspected of tampering with the report, but she has previously asserted that she was the target of German intrigue aimed at damaging France.

Although there was little public support in Paris for Mme Cresson yesterday, French diplomats in Brussels suggested that she had been justified in her claims that the anti-fraud report had been modified at the last moment. They agreed that certain paragraphs had been changed overnight on Sunday.

French feelings about Mme

THE DEFENCE
Edith Cresson says the evidence against her has been tampered with, writes Adam Sage

Cresson are coloured by memories of her time in domestic politics. Blaming others has been a constant feature of her public career, and one that seems to have been adopted by her associates.

Dr René Berthelot, the dentist reported to have been the beneficiary of Mme Cresson's largesse in Brussels, said last year that she had been turned into a scapegoat in Europe, just as she was when she became French Prime Minister eight years ago.

In one of the few interviews he has given to the press, he said that he had known Mme Cresson for 20 years and helped her "as a friend" when she was appointed as European Commissioner. "I have a great liking for her and I was attracted by her dynamism when she was Mayor of Châtelleraut", where he lived, Dr Berthelot told *Le Figaro*.

Mme Cresson used him to keep an eye on the local council in Châtelleraut when she was a minister in Paris, and

continued to do so when she moved to Brussels. The practice, denounced as nepotism by the fraud inquiry, is common in French politics, where senior figures often occupy several posts.

When François Mitterrand chose Mme Cresson as Prime Minister, in preference to more obvious and heavy-weight candidates, there was much surprise in political circles and speculation about their relationship. A rumour they were having an affair was angrily denied by Mme Cresson, although the late President, a celebrated womaniser, never bothered to deny it.

"Isn't she charming?" he once said. A similar rumour has hung over Mme Cresson's friendship with her dentist. French press reports suggest that they were more than friends for a while and lived together at one stage. But Dr Berthelot insists that their relations have always been platonic.

Dr Berthelot was admitted to hospital in December. Press reports said that he had suffered a heart attack, although a family friend, who declined to be named, said yesterday that he had had a nervous breakdown. He is recovering in Folders Regional University Hospital in central France.

Before his illness, Dr Berthelot, 70, said of the scandal in Brussels: "This is an attempt to destabilise Edith Cresson." She has always thought much the same thing and has never been slow to denounce her many enemies.



'Someone wanted people to believe I would mislead Parliament. That is a lie'

Small-town dentist who has gained international fame as a 'friend of Edith'

FROM SUSAN BELL
IN CHÂTELLERAUT

TALK OF TOWN

CHATELLERAUT'S crumbling town hall was veiled in dusty netting yesterday as it undergoes repair work as if in mourning for its disgraced former mayor. This sleepy 10th-century French town on the banks of the River Vienne seems an unlikely setting for international scandal.

At first glance, life seemed to be carrying on as normal, but in the

cafés and bars that line the narrow streets, groups gathered to discuss in hushed voices Edith Cresson's relationship with the town's grey-haired former dentist which brought about her downfall in Brussels.

Many in Châtelleraut are still bitter at what they consider to be Mme Cresson's abandonment of their town in favour of Brussels

only a few months after they had elected her mayor, leaving her deputy, Joel Tordusson, a doctor with little political experience, to take over. "People feel betrayed," said the owner of the Boulangerie Henri IV.

Reactions to Mme Cresson's resignation from the European Commission were mixed. Some felt that their abrasive former mayor had finally gone too far and deserved her fate. Others were more forgiving, even suggesting she was the

victim of a European Union plot. As for Dr René Berthelot, the former dentist she appointed a scientific adviser to the European Commission, bringing charges of nepotism on herself, he has gained fame in Châtelleraut as a "Friend of Edith".

He was not a member of the Socialist Party and appears content to have taken a back seat in local politics. Yesterday local party members appeared anxious to portray the man who earned £45,600 a

year from the Commission for doing virtually nothing as a faithful and selfless adviser to the European Commissioner. "He is a comrade of the shadows, a faithful servant who preferred helping his friend without drawing attention to himself without reason," said a local Socialist Party member.

However his friendship and influence over Mme Cresson is common knowledge in the close-knit small-town community. "It was said that she did nothing without

Dr Berthelot's advice. He was known as her spiritual mentor," Dominique Delplanque, a businesswoman, said of the man who once boasted that he had drawn up Mme Cresson's horoscope.

However, residents stopped short of commenting on speculation that their former mayor's close friendship with a man who stayed frequently at her home in Brussels went any further. "That is their business. It is their private life which they have a right to," said a

retired teacher invoking the French respect for *la vie privée*.

Web rush: The Internet sites (<http://www.europarl.eu.int/experts> and <http://www2.europarl.eu.int/experts>) carrying the report on fraud and mismanagement in the Commission registered more than one million hits in their first day, a European Parliament official said yesterday. "We have not seen traffic like this since the launch of the (Parliament) site," Peter Papamiliak said. (Reuters)

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COMMISSION IN CRISIS

Chirac accused in sleaze scandal

BY ADAM SAGE

PRESIDENT Chirac was thrust to the centre of a judicial fraud investigation in Paris yesterday as the laxity that has characterised French public life came under scrutiny.

The allegations made against M Chirac echo the scandal that hit Edith Cresson in Brussels, with both accused of cronyism and a willful disregard of taxpayers' money.

The latest chapter in a long inquiry into phantom jobs at the Paris town hall reminded voters that M Chirac is a child of the same culture that produced Mme Cresson and his predecessor as head of state, François Mitterrand.

It is a culture dominated by a few people who have worked their way through the meritocratic education system to form a tight-knit caste that believes in its own superiority.

That belief is widely seen as responsible for the sleaze that engulfed Mme Cresson and her fellow Socialists at the start of the 1990s and that is now lapping around the President's Gaullist movement.

Yesterday the newspaper *Liberation* said that an investigating magistrate had obtained a highly compromising letter written by M Chirac when he was Mayor of Paris in 1993. In it, he is said to have asked for the promotion of a woman employed by his Gaullist party but paid by the Paris town hall.

The document suggests, the newspaper said, that M Chirac was aware of the phantom-job scandal that is the subject of an inquiry by the Parisian judge, Patrick Desmure.

The scandal broke when a former Paris employee, Georges Quémar, said the council had funded several hundred people who worked for centre-right political parties and never set foot in the town hall.



The condemned Commission gathers round the oval table for its weekly Wednesday session, where it agreed to announce that it had "no intention of remaining in office a moment longer than we have to"

Top table prolongs death agony

The masters of Europe go through the motions of power, Charles Bremner reports

It could have been any Wednesday at the Breydel building, the Brussels pile recast this week as Europe's Augean stables. At the entrance, drivers polished limousines in milky sunshine while, upstairs on the 12th floor, their masters sat down around their big oval table for their regular weekly session.

Rushing in, Neil Kinnock, Britain's junior commissioner, tried to inject a sense of reality. "It is not business as usual. It can't be. We resigned on Monday night," he said.

Item number one on the agenda was certainly irregular. After a *tour de table*, a key European Union ritual in which everyone airs a position, Jacques Santer and his team agreed to announce that they had "no intention of remaining in office a moment longer than we have to". Out of decency, however, they would avoid any new political initiatives.

Fresh from his visit to the grave,

the "college of commissioners" proceeded to business, such as approving aid to a Spanish shipbuilder.

One item did convey the delicate predicament of the 20 august figures who were supposed to have become ex-commissioners when they all resigned on Monday. This was a revamped proposal to set up an independent unit to pursue fraud in the Commission. In succession to the unit which failed to pursue fraud in the Commission. The new unit will go under the name of Olaf, which has nothing to do with the spirit of Nordic probity. It is just a French acronym for Office for Fighting Fraud.

Three commissioners were dispatched to the basement to present their decisions to "the sharks", the crush of reporters and television cameras which has spent the week

chronicling the supposed death throes of the Santer administration. As the hottest show in Europe, the media room has been augmented by an unusual crowd of voyeurs, including officials who have been transfixed by the crucifixion of their bosses and Mr Santer's unrepentant self-mutilation on Tuesday.

You did not need a background in Kremlinology to decode the message in the line-up. After the disaster of his back-from-the-abyss outing on Tuesday, Mr Santer was nowhere to be seen. "We had to keep him hidden, we can't take any more incompetence," said a senior aide to one of the commissioners now in open rebellion against their boss.

Instead, the job of keeping the Commission afloat in public had been handed to Karel van Miert, the

pugnacious Belgian Commissioner who is responsible for competition. "We have a duty to carry on," he said. "Just because the Commission has resigned does not mean we have to block all business."

The Belgian, who enjoys wide respect, was managing fine until he handed over to Anita Gradin, the anti-fraud commissioner whose failure to pursue skulduggery in the Commission was nailed by the outside inquiry.

Visibly uncomfortable, Mrs Gradin, whose Swedish Government has this week disowned her, then put her foot in it by explaining the merits of the new independent fraud unit. This, she stressed, would, or... be appointed by the Commission and would operate within it. Senior

officials rolled their eyes. "Why did they let her open her mouth?" groaned one Eurocrat.

Mario Monti, the Italian (ex-) commissioner in charge of taxes, added to the levity with some elegant irony. The decision to desist from launching any initiatives would, unfortunately, mean that it would not suggest a delay in the abolition of duty-free, he said. Signor Monti, of course, never had any such aim. He has been infuriating Britain and half-a-dozen other member states for months by refusing demands to call for a change of heart on eliminating the duty-free system. A Commission proposal is the vital first step for any such action.

After a deft compliment to the strongman qualities of Mr van Miert, Signor Monti insisted that they

had to face up to their responsibilities to stay at their desks. "We are not physical fugitives," he said.

Upstairs on the 12th floor, aides were coaching Mr Santer on how not to mess up his latest outing — an appearance on the BBC *Nine O'Clock News* last night. Not everything, it must be said, was Mr Santer's fault. He was still fuming yesterday over a disastrous error by an interpreter on Tuesday. This led to much of the British media quoting him as claiming that the auditors had declared him "whiter than white". In fact, he had been talking, in French, about a specific allegation against his family and what he really said was, "they completely cleared me on that". The damage, had, however, been done.

The routine of the phantom Commission is now likely to continue for weeks, if not months, as EU states wrangle over the succession.

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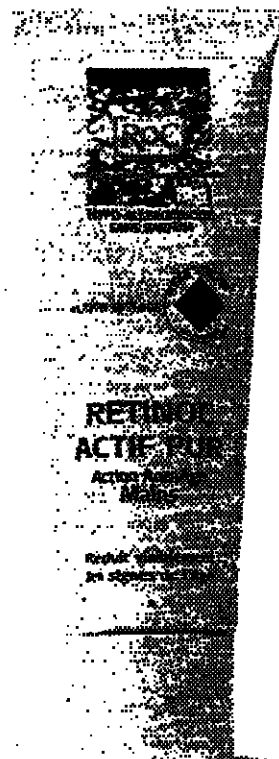
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Weary America set to kill off 'too political' independent prosecutors

AMERICA'S top legal official yesterday sounded the death knell for the statute that enabled Kenneth Starr, the independent prosecutor, to bring about the investigation, prosecution and impeachment of President Clinton.

Janet Reno, the US Attorney-General, told a Senate hearing that she had decided to oppose renewing the independent counsel statute, passed in the wake of the Watergate scandal to create a powerful and independent legal tool

Attorney-General disillusioned by \$50m Starr inquiries, reports Ben Macintyre

for investigating senior office-holders. She said that the process of appointing such investigators had become hopelessly politicised.

According to Justice Department officials, Ms Reno, once a staunch defender of the independent prosecutors' office, had decided that several inquiries, most nota-

bly that of Mr Starr, had spun out of control and that the statute was "structurally flawed".

It has become deeply unpopular with most Democratic and Republican leaders in Congress, and the Attorney-General's opposition represents the death blow; it is likely to be scrapped when its term ex-

pires on June 30. No fewer than seven independent prosecutors have spent \$70 million (£43.2 million) investigating Mr Clinton and various members of his Administration, persuading most Democrats of the view, long held by Republicans after investigations during the Reagan-Bush years, that the office has become an expensive and uncontrollable anachronism. The statute was passed 21 years ago, after Richard Nixon fired the Watergate investigator Archibald

Cox, to allow objective, apolitical prosecutors to conduct investigations into suspect activities by top-level officials within the Administration. Instead, opponents argue, the office has become unwieldy, unfair and open to abuse.

Ms Reno is believed to be particularly frustrated with Mr Starr, who spent five years and some \$50 million investigating Mr Clinton, beginning with the Whitewater real estate deal but finally focusing on the Monica Lewinsky affair.

According to officials in her office, Ms Reno felt that individual prosecutors were liable to become loose cannons. "Some of the special prosecutors... ended up taking a very simple, narrow issue and turned it into a long, drawn-out investigation that often seemed to stray from the original mandate," one official said.

The existing statute requires the Attorney-General to refer investigations to external prosecutors whenever specific and credible charges

are made against top officials. It was designed to keep the Justice Department away from political controversy, but since the Attorney-General is the sole authority able to decide when an independent investigation is warranted, it had precisely the reverse effect.

Ms Reno's opposition represents a remarkable personal volte-face. In 1993 she argued that, while the independent counsel statute had certain flaws, it was necessary and liable to foster public confidence.

MI6 'proposed Iraqi coup' to topple Saddam

FROM JAMES BONE IN NEW YORK

BRITISH intelligence encouraged the United States to seek a "quick, simple coup" in Iraq through an opposition group that Britain had created and which later mounted a failed effort to overthrow President Saddam Hussein, a former senior United Nations inspector claims.

Scott Ritter, writing in his new book, *Endgame*, says that in the mid-1990s MI6 pushed the Central Intelligence Agency to shift its support from the Iraqi National Congress, which was recruiting an army in Kurdish-held northern Iraq, to the rival Iraqi National Accord (INA), which was based in Jordan.

"More and more, the CIA was being wooed by the British secret intelligence service, or MI6, which proposed a quick, simple coup, orchestrated from within by military officers close to Saddam," he writes. "Such was the offer being presented by the rival opposition group, the INA. The CIA began supporting both factions, but putting the bulk of its effort behind the INA."

Mr Ritter describes the INA as a "creation of the British MI6" and says it consists of "former military personnel who had defected from Iraq

and who were hoping to take advantage of their old contacts at home". Although the INA had amassed 10,000 men to stage a ground war from northern Iraq, the CIA changed policy on the eve of the planned battle in March 1995 and told the group's London-based leader, Ahmed Chalabi, that it would not provide military assistance.

Mr Chalabi launched the attack anyway, but his Kurdish allies split and an Iraqi counter-offensive routed his forces. In early 1996, the CIA was ordered to develop a

"quick-fix" solution to get rid of Saddam before the American presidential elections the following November and "the only option was the INA".

The book records the INA's failed attempt to get members of the Republican Guard to stage a coup — a plot that was foiled in June 1996 when the Iraqis intercepted CIA-supplied communications gear.

Mr Ritter says he suspects that a UN inspections mission at the time, known as Unsmoc 150, might have been used as cover by the CIA to help to execute the planned coup. Unknowingly, he led his team against the same Special Republican Guard facilities involved in the plot. The team included nine "CIA paramilitary covert operators", including an operative he calls "Moe Dobbs", a US Army Special Forces veteran who had played a critical role supporting the Contras in Nicaragua and had spent the Gulf War in Syria directing Arab agents inside Iraq.

"There is virtually no chance that opposition groups could overthrow Saddam," Mr Ritter writes. "Attempts by the CIA and the British MI6 to orchestrate a coup from within all met with disaster."



Ritter: notes failure of CIA and MI6 coup bids



Jackie Chan, centre, the Hong Kong film star, is joined by Tony Leung, left, a fellow actor, and Tsui Hark, film director, at a demonstration calling on the Government to take tougher action against illegal copying of their work. The territory's 73 cinemas closed for the day in support of the protest. Industry leaders say piracy, rife in Hong Kong, is costing them 60 per cent of their turnover and threatening thousands of jobs

First black grandmaster learnt chess from library book

BY JAMES BONE

A JAMAICAN immigrant in New York who taught himself chess from a library book and on the Internet has become the world's first black grandmaster. Maurice Ashley became the 470th person to receive the game's highest rank when he won enough points in a tournament game at the Manhattan

Chess Club to qualify for the honour. "I'm numb from the neck down and giddy from the neck up," Mr Ashley, 32, who runs an after-school chess club for youngsters in Harlem, said.

He started playing at what is considered the late age of 14 when a friend at his high school in Brooklyn challenged him to a game and "totally destroyed" him. Determined to salvage his pride,

Mr Ashley got a chess book from the library and pored over strategies and gambits. He joined his school's chess club, but was not good enough to make the first team, but went on to become head of his college chess association.

He also joined the Black Bear School of Chess, a group of young black chess fanatics in Brooklyn. Mr Ashley coached two Harlem youth teams to

win three national championships, and three of his players won individual championships. Two years ago he began training to become a grandmaster, spending six hours a day studying moves on his computer and live games on the Internet.

"My success will show black youngsters that they can be successful at an intellectual pursuit," he said.

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Eritreans claim border rout of Ethiopian force

FROM ROBIN LODGE IN NAIROBI

ERITREA said yesterday that it had routed a force of 40,000 Ethiopian troops in three days of border fighting this week, leaving hundreds of bodies and 50 burnt-out tanks scattered around the battlefield.

The latest clashes between the two sides, who resumed fighting along the disputed border last month after an eight-month truce, took place on the Tselemtse front, 60 miles southwest of the Eritrean capital, Asmara, where the Ethiopians have been trying to retake territory seized by the Eritreans last year.

A similar Ethiopian offensive last month at Badme, about 100 miles to the north-west, succeeded in driving Eritrean forces several miles back, albeit at a heavy cost.

With both sides dug into trenches in mountainous terrain, attackers are exposed to withering fire and almost certain to suffer heavy casualties. The indications are that this is what happened on the Tselemtse front, but that the Ethiopians failed to seize the Eritrean trenches. Journal-

ists taken to the front by the Eritreans on Tuesday reported seeing at least 300 Ethiopian bodies and scores of destroyed tanks, many still in flames.

An Ethiopian government spokeswoman, Selome Tadesse, dismissed the scenes displayed by the Eritreans as a public relations exercise.

She said: "Whatever the Eritrean Government might assert, whatever evidence it might produce to back up its incredible assertions, one can be fairly sure that it is just the latest round in the Government's campaign of deception and fabrication."

She added that many Eritreans had died in the fighting. The Eritreans gave no details of their own losses.

Both sides have accepted a peace plan by the Organisation of African Unity, calling for the withdrawal of troops from the disputed area pending mediation. The Eritreans have since called for a ceasefire, but the Ethiopians insist that they first withdraw from territory around Zalambesse on the Tselemtse front.



Bodies of Ethiopian troops lie scattered on an embankment in front of Eritrean defences in Belessa on the Tselemtse front after a failed offensive

Suu Kyi's husband denied last visa

BY MICHAEL DYNES

MICHAEL ARIS, the British husband of Aung San Suu Kyi, the Burmese opposition leader, is pleading with the military authorities in Rangoon for a visa to visit his wife after being diagnosed as seriously ill with cancer.

Mr Aris, a fellow of St Antony's College, Oxford, who married in 1972, has been told that he is suffering from prostate cancer which has spread to his spine and lungs. He is not expected to live long, sources close to the family said.

It is understood that Mr Aris is desperate to see his wife one last time. But the military regime, which has refused to issue him with a visa for the past three years, is insisting his wife be the one to travel.

Daw Suu Kyi, who won the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize for her courage in defying military rule, has applied for a visa on her husband's behalf, but there has been no response. She has not left the country for 11 years, fearing that she would never be allowed back.

The state-controlled media have over the past 12 months called repeatedly for Daw Suu Kyi to leave or be expelled.

Organs of orphans 'sold to wealthy'

EGYPTIAN prosecutors yesterday began an investigation into allegations that 25 children died after a charity sold them to private hospitals for use in organ transplants.

The allegations were made in a complaint laid before the public prosecutor by MPs representing Menoufieh district in the Nile delta, where the abuses are said to have taken place.

The MPs claimed that 25 out of 32 children taken in by the Association for the Care of Abandoned Children died during a three-month period last year, after their organs were sold to rich patients for up to £20,000. The charity, which runs a facility known locally as the Foundlings' Village in Quweisina, was set up to look after illegitimate children abandoned by their mothers.

Egyptian officials yesterday confirmed that there had been abnormal deaths among children cared for by the association, but they denied that transplants were involved.

The Ministry of Social Af-

Inquiry launched into why children in Egypt died after being sent to private clinics, writes Jim Muir

fairs confirmed that last year it investigated two related Menoufieh charities, one run by a former television producer and the other by his wife, after complaints of irregularities, including the death of an unspecified number of children and the falsification of at least one death certificate.

The ministry's investigations concluded that the deaths were caused by gross negligence. "But all the deaths were from natural causes, there were no transplants, and the hospital records prove this," Anwar Sharif, an official spokesman, said yesterday.

The reports also concluded that both charities were guilty of financial and administrative irregularities. Their boards of directors were both dissolved in November and December on the orders of the

local Governor, Adli Hussein. He also issued a denial last night that the children died as the victims of organ transplants.

"Transplanting organs as the MPs claim requires very specific medical conditions and facilities - it could not possibly be done here in Menoufieh," he added.

But one of the MPs, Ibrahim Genainah, repeated the accusations. "I am fully convinced that the children died because of transplants," he said. "The serial numbers on the death certificates of the 25 dead children were all in sequence. That does not make sense. What we say is that there has been a crime."

The allegations came as parliamentarians were divided over controversial draft legislation which would permit or-

gan transplants from newly-dead donors under strictly controlled conditions.

At present, such operations are illegal in Egypt except for cornea grafts and kidney and bone marrow transplants from live donors - provided no money changes hands and the recipient is Egyptian.

The head of the Egyptian Medical Association, Dr Hamdi al-Sayid - himself an MP and a keen advocate of the transplant Bill - said yesterday he believed the allegations about the children were part of a campaign to head off the legislation. Some Islamists believe any kind of transplant breaches religious law.

"I am very sceptical about the accusations and I don't believe it," he said. "I think they have brought this up now because of the debate over the new Bill. We are responsible for the medical profession in this country, and we have a detailed list of every transplant that takes place."

□ Jim Muir is the BBC's Middle East correspondent.

Boesak found guilty of stealing children's cash

FROM SAM KILEY IN JOHANNESBURG

ALLAN BOESAK, the South African cleric and close friend of Nelson Mandela, was convicted yesterday of stealing donations that were intended for child victims of apartheid.

Boesak, once a leading cleric in the anti-apartheid struggle, was convicted of three charges of theft and one of fraud. He stole \$72,000 (£44,000) of a \$200,000 donation to his Foundation for Peace and Justice by the American singer Paul Simon, said Judge John Foxcroft at Cape Town High Court.

He also defrauded the Swedish Government of \$226,000, which he used to build a studio for his second wife, Elna, a former television personality. He also stole from his own charity.

He was acquitted on 23 other charges of fraud and theft and will be sentenced next week. In his ruling, Mr Foxcroft

said: "The accused wrongfully and unlawfully appropriated money intended for children of South Africa. He treated the money as his own."

Boesak sat stony-faced as the verdict was read out. His many friends in the ruling African National Congress, who had supported his claims of innocence and had cleared him of any wrongdoing in an inquiry, were absent. His mentor, President Mandela, last year made several impassioned appeals for donations to a defence fund for Boesak.

Prosecutors, who endured criticism from ANC stalwarts, said Boesak used the money to fund a lavish lifestyle.

The verdict comes as Justice Willem Heath, who heads investigations into corruption, faces unprecedented ministerial criticism for his apparent success in exposing graft. The attacks have led to dismay and accusations among South Africans that the ANC is presiding over a moral decline in public life.



Allan Boesak, who enjoyed a lavish lifestyle, leaves court yesterday

30p THE TIMES

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Big wheels don't drive Fiestas

We are a nation obsessed by rank and place. In suburbia there is no better indicator of class than your car, says Celia Brayfield

Britain has a new class system. For the past couple of years we have been in social anarchy. We have struggled to comprehend the poshness of Posh Spice, the elitism of Beryl Bainbridge, the unsportsmanlike actions of the Chelsea defender Graeme Le Saux.

Today accent, manners, education, heritage or use of fish knives are meaningless. The post-Martian east-of-the-river snobbery that valued regional accents, rudeness and lack of education as sure-fire signs of personal integrity got its UB40 with old Labour. Our class system runs counter to income, so the marketing bands ABC1 to C2DE, based on earnings, never really worked for us.

We became a nation of niche markets, cult followings, microtrends, mini-celebs and managed information in which, for a while, nobody knew who they were any more, let alone how to express their identity. The British can't handle this; we need to define ourselves in hierarchical terms. This is about security, not domination. We want a system of rank not so that we can be high in it, but so that we can know our place. Then we're happy.

Roll on the car. Vehicles are the new class indicator, and Brookside Nation, a survey of suburban attitudes conducted by the advertising agency Abbott Mead Vickers, proves it. Listening to Budget analysts last week, it was clear the agency was spot on. Every reporter used car ownership to evoke a social grade. A tabloid took White Van Man to Downing Street to park outside No 10, while the financial supplements worried that Murdoch Man was being squeezed until his trims squeaked. Commentators opined that Mr and Mrs BMW would have to forgo their upgrade next year, and gave the Range Rovers new tips on tax avoidance.

The agency, desperate to map out some kind of mass market among our choice-crazed population, focused on the six million people living on new housing estates. With a statistical analysis backed up by focus groups spread over the South

East, Midlands and North, they probed the tastes and values of estate dwellers and discovered that the car said it all. In the new Britain you are what you drive. It really is that simple. The Brookside held it to be an article of faith that "you can judge a person by the car they drive" and passionately denied "that a car is just something that gets you from A to B".

The great thing about cars is that by adding and subtracting gadgets you can create a caste system more intricate than that of India. It is widely believed in the motor trade that models sold in Britain come in more variations than anywhere else in Europe, because of our desperate need to display our precise social status. The survey found the Brookside were acutely aware of every detail and nuance of car design — the letters after the model name on the boot conveyed as much social context as Jeeves could deduce from the buttons on a Savile Row suit.

In new neighbourhoods built American-style without fences or hedges, displaying the car is an essential ritual. None of the folk in focus groups kept their cars in their garages; they kept them in their drives, where they were lovingly and regularly groomed. Why would people who could easily run to a platinum token for the car wash waste their precious leisure time messing around with hoses, sponges and bottles of car polish? They definitely preferred to wash their cars by hand, and even washed them in the rain.

Washing the car was clearly a way of drawing the neighbours' attention to it. The consumption of car polish correlated to the value of the house — the richer the family, the more they polished their car. People who did not polish their cars were deemed nutters. White Van Man, lacking a driveway, compensates by turning on his radio to blast thundering hip-hop down the street while he's busy with the leather.

People discuss each other's cars exactly as the apostles of Nancy Mitford and John Betjeman once talked about toilets and note-paper versus lavatories and writing paper. One



Washing the car draws the neighbours' attention to it. The consumption of polish correlates to the value of the house — the richer the family, the more they polish their car.



You can tell he's posh: David Beckham and his new Jaguar

car per adult is required and wealthier families are twice as likely as other people to have three cars per household. Newness is all, and people who drive old vehicles are seen as morally unsound. Children are given cars as soon as they get their provisional licences.

This class system is largely untouched by feminism. In Brookside

Nation the man of the house is the breadwinner and drives, or aspires to, a Rover 600, Mercedes, Range Rover or BMW, while his wife will fall behind in her career at the start of their family and is content to sling her gym bag into a frivolous 4x4, a Suzuki Vitara or Rav 4. One of the agency's focus groups was fixated by a particular neighbour,

judged a total slapper for having a Ford Fiesta and living with a man who drove a 5-series BMW. Who did she think she was? demanded the goodwives of Brookside Nation. "Not that there's anything wrong with Ford Fiestas as such..."

This culture first took root in the heartland of the motor industry, the Midlands, and its spread has been reinforced by American assimilation of British business. Company-car ownership creates micro-cultures in all workplaces. Employees value themselves according to what they can choose from the corporate fleet. It is a reliable status system, but not proof against social climbers. Some companies operate an overt dividend system, letting people pay extra to upgrade a vehicle. Others operate the same policy covertly: only the fleet manager knows which executives have paid to drive something more flash than their entitlement. Strong men weep if their company cars are downgraded, though some camouflage

their income by driving down — like a fortysomething marketing hotshot trying to hide his age by choosing the same plain Vauxhall as his twentysomething rivals.

For maximum status a car's value must be displayed externally but you can make only so many statements with alloy wheels and xenon headlights. At BMW, where 65 to 70 per cent of business in Britain involves company cars, the letters SE, for special equipment, are used on the most sought-after models. This allows invisible extras such as air-conditioning to be advertised.

The new class system has no ceiling: whatever your status, the need to show it never wanes. A chauffeur who drives chief executives from one boardroom to another knows men who refuse to go to meetings if the car assigned to them is "anything less than a Lexus or Jaguar".

The arts seem to be the only corner of society outside this system.

Brookside Nation is an arts-free zone — people don't own books, don't go to cinema or theatre, don't hang pictures because the nails spoil the plaster. Houseproud though they are, design means nothing to them. So cars are their only means of expressing themselves.

But in the arts self-expression is a way of life, and car culture doesn't count. "It's almost the reverse," says a film art director who until recently drove a 14-year-old Range Rover and had a museum-age Morris Estate for his wife. "You're not deemed a failure if you turn up in an old car. In fact, you don't want to drive anything ostentatious or expensive, it makes people envious. It's unwise in such an unstable business."

So that's all right then. I have an eight-year-old Daihatsu Fourtrak TX. I know my place. I look up to him, because he has a new BMW 750iL, but look down on her, because she has a Ford Fiesta. A nasty couple of years there but it's all sorted now. Phew.

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Fighting the plastic pirates

Clare Hogan lost £2,500 from her credit card while it stayed in her purse

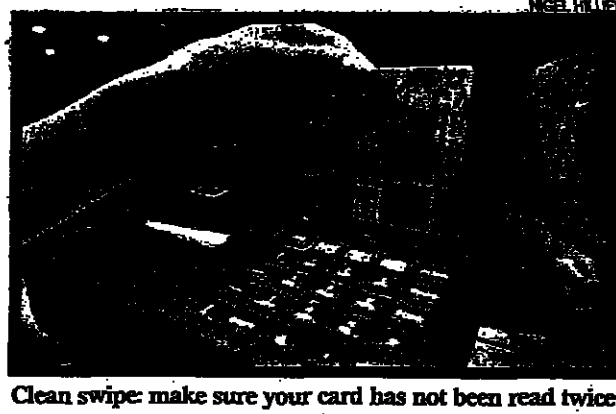
The first time it happened I nearly had a heart attack. In five days A.N. Other had spent £2,500 on my credit card, buying clothes, shoes, a bicycle and sports and computer equipment from shops in Ilford, East London. My card had not left my purse.

When it happened a second time last week, six years later, I was more sanguine. This time it was just £10.95 and the card company phoned me on the day that the transaction went through. The man said he thought that my card had been "compromised". Had I bought anything through an Internet site in California?

Yet again my card had not been stolen, so how was the company alerted to the fraud so quickly? My first thought was that since I am a shopper of habit — train fares, Sussex Farm Foods, my local garden nursery — something as exciting as an Internet purchase would stand out. I was right. I am a boring shopper, but it didn't take an army of bank staff to sift through individual accounts to find out.

A year ago my bank took delivery of a computer system called Falcon and it has been watching me closely ever since. Joy Przczek, the senior manager of fraud strategy and card services at NatWest, says that the bank has a profile of the spending habits of each customer and "a profile of a fraud spend". All day, every day "the computer compares the two and we contact the cardholder if we have any doubts". NatWest has about 16 million credit and debit card transactions a month and the new system looks at about eight million of them.

According to the Association of Payment Clearing Services, card fraud in Britain cost £135 million last year. "All the major issuers have Falcon or something similar," says Ms Przczek. "Because criminals are getting more



Clean swipe: make sure your card has not been read twice

and more organised, you are only as good as your weakest link. All financial institutions in Britain share information on fraud because it is a non-competitive issue. America has had something like Falcon for about two years and Germany and France have installed it recently.

How were the criminals able to get the details of my card? No one could give me a definite answer but, since it is a gold card with a fairly high credit limit, it must be on any criminal's wish list. At least I got my money back in full on both occasions.

Fraud falls into several categories: counterfeiting cards; lost or stolen cards; card not present (when you pay by mail, telephone or on the Internet); and card not received (when your new card never reaches you).

Counterfeiting cards — known as skimming — is a growing problem for banks. Criminals can either alter existing cards — this despite the fact that at least seven safeguards, such as the hologram, have been built into the card — or create new cards with your details on them. Counterfeiting is linked to international criminals, including Triad gangs. One reason why major issuers suggest that you keep your card in sight, particularly when paying, is that retailers with criminal links can swipe a card through a payment machine twice — once for your bill, the second time on a different machine that will take all your details. These can then be passed on to counterfeiters who will make a new card. Because the card is new, anyone can sign it and use it. After the first credit card

shop for up to ten days and then to throw them away. Ms Przczek says that banks are making the most of Falcon. Added to that, in the next two or three years "we expect to start rolling out chip and smart cards that will be even more secure". Has the Internet made things easier for criminals? "The number of disputed transactions is increasing," she says.

When I told friends about the call from the bank, everyone had a story to tell of an uncle whose gold card had been used to buy a Rolex in Hong Kong, and a stolen card that was used a year later. I expect the next criminal using my card to do something a little more spectacular. If only to live up to my buying profile.



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Salmond spends a costly penny

The Scots are being asked to stump up for nationalism

Just as hostilities are declared in Brussels, Downing Street has had to open a second front in Scotland. The big battalions have been sent across the border, and reinforcements summoned to contain an unexpected flanking attack. Unless it can be cut off rapidly, it might just break through the forward echelons and hit the main division of Labour's standing army, painfully, in the rear.

With 50 days to go to the first Scottish elections, the awful whiff of defeat hangs like cordite in the air. How else to explain the Chancellor's hurried journey north, his greatcoat slung across his shoulders. Napoleon-style? The grim press conference, the terse response to media questions: the wheeling out of business leaders to predict the dangers ahead; the Prime Minister himself announcing, in Churchillian tones: "I urge the Scottish people not to put their future at risk."

All this because the Scottish National Party has announced that it intends to raise, not lower, taxes. At its conference in Aberdeen last week, it said that, if elected, it would forgo Gordon Brown's 1p reduction in basic income tax, and use the revenue to invest in public services. The SNP calculates that this will be a relatively painless process for the average taxpayer, and will provide an extra £700 million during the first term of a Scottish parliament for education, health or housing. It plays on the belief that the Scots, unlike the English, are willing to pay more in tax in return for higher state investment.

This is a massive gamble. It cuts right across the tactics adopted hitherto by Alex Salmond, the SNP leader, which have been aimed at wooing the business vote. His instinct had been to present the SNP as a modern social democratic party, keen to build an enterprise economy and to use the Scottish parliament to put Scotland at the forefront of technological development. There was much talk of another "Celtic tiger" after the Irish model. Enter pride, compassion, democracy was the fine slogan it adopted, with enterprise coming first.

But the fine rhetoric was not proving a notable winner in those parts of Scotland where the SNP has to pick up votes if it is to stand any chance of overthrowing Labour — the former industrial areas of Glasgow, the West of Scotland and the Central Belt. This was reckoned to be classic "old Labour" territory, ripe for SNP inroads. An analysis of the party's prospects, however, using the additional member system, which will determine the number of second-vote seats to be won, showed that although the Nationalists stood second in a number of key constituencies, they were losing ground and would not pick up enough support to beat their principal rivals.

Then, listening to the Budget last week, John Swinney, the SNP's Treasury spokesman, thought he detected a Labour own-goal. By announcing his tax reduction, Mr Brown offered the SNP what seemed a golden opportunity

of raising a tax which would leave no Scot worse off — simply not as well off as their English counterparts.

For most of the party faithful in Aberdeen last week, it sounded like a godsend. A buoyant Mr Salmond announced a whole range of public projects — free tuition fees, scrapping the tolls on the Skye Bridge, linking every school to the Internet, more books for schools and libraries, almost as if he had won the National Lottery. He also raised the biggest cheer of the day by promising to scrap Trident in a nuclear-free Scotland.

Suddenly we were back in a land which we had all but forgotten: pre-Thatcher land, where governments did what governments were meant to do: raising taxes and spending them on the people: nostalgia reigned. True, there were some dissenters to be coralled, and one or two speeches from the platform showed more than a hint of discomfort at this sudden lurch backwards.

That old Nationalist troublemaker, Jim Sillars, described it as a classic miscalculation. But no one doubted that the move had defined the Scottish elections and the position of the two leading parties in a way that nothing before had done. There was much talk of "clear tartan water".

Labour's response was immediate. It calculated the cost to the average taxpayer as £5 a week. Mr Brown came north and summoned business leaders to say that jobs would be lost and firms would have to move south. He predicted chaos as separate systems were drawn up north and south of the border. In doing so, of course, he was taking a calculated risk.

The names wheeled out in Labour's defence bore a surprising resemblance to those the Tories summoned to warn voters about Labour's devolution plans. It handed the SNP an extra weapon: here, it was able to say, was a campaign run from London, using Tory allies to fight a Tory-style offensive.

In the end, however, I believe the SNP has got it wrong. Its approach assumes that the Scots are an unconquered people who will respond, Pavlovian style, to the lure of higher public spending; that they have learnt nothing from the recent history of Western economies; that they will vote instinctively for a tax-raising party without inquiring further into how efficiently that party intends to govern. The SNP may even have taken its own followers for granted. Its homeland territory of northeast Scotland was once held by the Tories. A disproportionately high number of voters in the area said "No" in the referendum on whether a Scottish parliament should have tax-raising powers.

The SNP, in short, may have committed one of those great strategic blunders that lose battles and cost lives: in storming forward it may have forgotten its lines of supply.

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Magnus Linklater



It could get even worse

The latest Euro-crisis may benefit those who got us into this mess

The Europhiles need not despair and Eurosceptics should certainly not celebrate. Perverse as it may seem, this week may mark a great leap forward for the "European Project".

The fiasco in Brussels suggests that the historic choice for Europe cannot be put off much longer. In choosing the new European Commission President — and doing so under the intense public scrutiny created by the Brussels crisis — the Governments of Europe will have to confront the momentous questions which they have been dodging, with diminishing success, for the past 40 years. Will the European Union reform itself and whittle down its functions to become a streamlined community of co-operative, self-governing, countries? Or will the EU finally make a wholehearted and explicit commitment to the creation of a federated, democratic United States of Europe?

These questions must now be faced because the EU cannot go on as before. I say this not for reasons of morality but of practical politics. In the past, the horse-trading over a new President and Commission in Brussels has been a matter of no great interest or importance to anyone but the political classes in the chancelleries of Europe. This time, however, the President's appointment will be laden with constitutional and symbolic importance. It will no longer do to appoint an obscure non-entity, a compromise candidate with no known opinions and no vision of Europe's future. He (or she) will have to present a programme, or at least a vision, for Europe that is understandable and impressive to the national electorates who will, for once, be watching the decisions made by their Governments in Brussels. The President's selection will be closer than ever before to a proper political campaign — and this will be followed immediately by the elections to the European Parliament in June. The upshot will be a period of intense political activity at the European level, in which the future direction of Europe will be exposed to unprecedented public attention and at least the appearance of democratic debate.

As this debate is joined, Europe will realise that it has reached a cross-roads. In one direction — the one clearly favoured not only by William Hague and the Conservatives, but by almost all strands of

political opinion in Britain, including even the Liberal Democrats — Europe would have to step backwards. It would shift towards decentralisation and voluntary co-operation between independent governments. If this road were chosen, the new President would commit himself to hand back to national governments those responsibilities which are not directly connected with the maintenance of open markets and free trade.

This process would start with such relatively trivial matters as tourism and road-building, but would move gradually towards the renationalisation of income support for farmers and might call into question the greatest centralising project of all — economic and monetary union. For this very reason, the whittling down of functions demanded by Mr Hague and notional support even by Tony Blair, seems most unlikely to happen.

This narrowing of focus might well be supported by many European voters, but despite the appearance of greater democracy in the forthcoming elections for the European President and Parliament, it will not be presented as a serious option by candidates, except perhaps by the Tories in Britain.

And what if Europe takes the other road, rejecting the demands for a narrower focus, as is much more likely. There will then be another momentous choice. Again, Europe is unlikely just to go on as before. It will move towards greater centralisation — and it will probably do so much more rapidly than most politicians expected even a few months ago. By imposing more accountability and openness on the new President and his Commission, the Governments of Europe will be investing them with a new legitimacy. By that very fact, the European Commission and the other centralising institutions will be

offered an irresistible invitation to extend their powers. But as the powers of the central institutions continue to grow, the demands for still greater democratic accountability, inspired by this week's debate in Brussels, will intensify. The Strasbourg Parliament will aspire to fill this gap. And the more legitimacy the Commission and the European Parliament respectively acquire, the greater will be their appetite for still more powers.

The only way to stop this vicious circle is to confront head-on the question of what "Europe" is for, and where it is going. Is the ultimate objective a fully fledged federal state or a free-trade zone? Or could it be, in my view most attractively, an association of independent countries, bound by a common political and legal framework, but co-operating in different fields to varying degrees and through different institutions? Whatever the

answer, a proper examination of the issues and a full-scale constitutional reform is now required. Significantly, the need for a new constitutional settlement for Europe, analogous to the Constitutional Convention that created the USA in 1789, is the one issue that unites almost all honest thinkers on Europe, ranging from Paddy Ashdown to Bill Cash. Unfortunately, it also unites almost all European Governments in the opposing camp. Governments on both sides of the federalist divide have tried to avoid these questions for contradictory motives. Instead of risking a direct confrontation with national cultures and historical traditions, European federalists proceeded from the start with circumspection, even stealth. The ill-fated Dutch attempt in 1991 to insert a reference to Europe's "federal destiny" into the first draft of the Treaty of Maastricht was the exception that proved the rule about the federal-

ists' general circumspection. Instead of following the American example and building their United States from the constitutional foundations upwards, the founding fathers of Europe decided on the opposite approach — the "functionalist" theory of European integration discussed in this column last month. Europe would develop through the almost imperceptible accretion of non-controversial economic and administrative functions to the centre in Brussels. In the end, therefore, Europe would reach the same federal destination as the United States. But under the functionalist programme, no explicit approval from the perverse and unpredictable peoples of Europe would be required for this grand design.

Eurosceptic politicians, at least those of a moderate, internationalist persuasion, have been equally reluctant to face the federalist issue head-on. Especially when in government, leaders such as John Major and even François Mitterrand and Jacques Chirac, have worried about presenting the people of Europe with a stark choice between a glorified free-trade zone and a fully federated European state. Their main worry has been that either their own people or those of other European nations would give the "wrong" answer. If Germany, in particular, were offered the choice of a fully federal Europe, it might say "yes". In that case Britain, and even France, would face a choice that few Eurosceptics have dared to contemplate: to give up their national independence or to pull out of the mainstream of European integration.

The obvious answer for countries such as Britain and Sweden is to allow Germany and other nations that want to federate (or to operate a single currency) to do so, while remaining in an outer tier of European economic integration. But this is a choice that British Governments have gone to enormous lengths to avoid. It was in trying to dodge this option that both John Major and Margaret Thatcher destroyed their political careers. The question now is whether Tony Blair — with his quixotic claim that he can reform Europe without re-examining its constitution or its ultimate political destination — will eventually succumb to the same fate.

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Bragg boost

LORD BRAGG is poised to come out as the most celebrated Blairite to be wooed by the New Europe movement. Melvyn is said to be a "deep sympathiser" with Lord Owen's classic pro-European, anti-single currency campaign. He has long told friends of his scepticism but had been reluctant to offend his Europhile masters in the Lords.

Now the movement is hopeful that he will become "an upstart campaigner" — "our door is well and truly open for him". Ah, it takes me back to sweet sunny days when faintly confused celebs marched behind the good doctor to uncharted triumphs with the SDP.

THE Duchess of Marlborough has been practising DIY medicine. She recently mended a dislocated shoulder by swinging from a doorway in Blenheim Palace.

SAM MENDES has a new leading lady. After splitting with Jane Horrocks (left), the artistic director of the Donmar Warehouse is dating Calista Flockhart (right), the delightfully angst-ridden, air-munching dame in *Ally McBeal*.

The duo met when Mendes took *Cabaret* to Broadway. His star has risen since, culminating in *The Blue Room*, in which he prevailed on Nicole Kidman to disrobe.



DAVID BECKHAM'S newborn son, Brooklyn, is to make an early debut. The Manchester United ballsmith has asked addidas to stitch his son's name into his boots, so he is reminded of his "greatest performance".

CARE in the Community: MPs are being sent on work experience. Eager pups such as Matthew Taylor and Austin Mitchell will spend ten days working for a charity. Most imaginative placement: Helen Brinton, harshly likened to an android, is to join MIND, the mental health charity. "I am particularly interested in personality disorders," she tells me.

NIL points for Brussels linguists. The Euro-babblers and sloppy English papers quoted Jacques Sauter as insisting he was "whiter than white". He actually said: "I was completely cleared on this point" (a claim about his wife, not about his conduct).



DIFFICULT days for Wythes. Tom Bantok's Soho club, With finance from Hamish McAlpine, Orlando Campbell as maître d' and parties from Dai Llewellyn, it seemed convivial. But, two months on, doors remain shut. "I didn't realise Tom had no licence or planning permission," says Dai. "I'm surprised it has come to this, as he had the right people behind him." The agreeable Campbell, meanwhile, is looking for work. Bantok insists the doors are sealed for "safety checks".

THE history of civilisation is the latest literary task entertaining Hywel Williams, having polished off the Tories with *Guilty Men*. The Egyptians are trying. "I am very suspicious of people who like cats," he reasons. He promises to knock the book off soon: "I've done the Ancient Greeks, so I am on the home straight."

YOUNG Etomians are being wooed by Alex Salmond to lead Scotland. He thinks aristocratic Scots, who have let his country down by scurrying south, should "come home". The Anglo-Scottish aristocracy has often done Scotland down, the SNP leaders tell *Splinter*, an Eton literary magazine. "I would hope with independence they would turn their energies to making Scotland a success."

JASPER GERARD

'Serbia should stand and fall before Nato, rather than slink into a dog kennel for voluntary vivisection'

Srdja Trifkovic

Britain and America are poised to wage war on a European nation just because that nation has the temerity to believe in itself. Serbia is threatened with a massive bombing offensive simply because it acts as any proud nation would — it refuses to have foreign troops colonising its soil.

By intervening in Kosovo, the West is aiding and abetting secession by an ethnic minority within Serbia. That secession, once effected, will render many European borders tentative. In the context of any other European nation the story would sound surreal. The Serbs, however, have been demonised to the point where they must not presume to be treated like others. The West feels no inhibition in bullying a nation which is prepared to protect its integrity. But just because the West feels no inhibition, why should it escape having

to give a rational justification?

"We must end the suffering!" we are told. But what about Rwanda, Burundi, Algeria and so many other unhappy lands?

The Western alliance regularly ignores horrific brutalities, and it has condoned aggression in eastern Turkey and East Timor. Taking action in Kosovo is not a stand in defence of universal principles. The West picks and chooses between the principle of self-determination and the principle of non-intervention as it suits. In Washington, Abdullah Ocalan is a terrorist, but the Kosovo Liberation Army are freedom-fighters. In each case, American interests decree who enjoys support, and who endures torture.

What is the West's specific interest in Kosovo? "Regional stability," we are told: if we don't contain this conflict now, it will engulf Macedonia, Greece, Turkey, and the entire Balkans.

But the West's proposed actions do not constitute a tour-de-force which will stanch the flow of blood — instead, they are applying leeches to the haemorrhage. To force Serbia into signing a plan that will effectively elevate Kosovo to the status of a constituent republic, with Nato troops brought in to seal the deal, will produce countless new hotbeds of instability. Insurrection will have been seen to be rewarded.

Far from stabilising things, this scenario will unleash a chain-reaction throughout the former Communist half of Europe. Its first victim will be the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia, where the restive Albanian minority makes up a third of the population (as opposed to a fifth in Serbia). Oddly,

the West does not object to the refusal of the Macedonian Government to grant autonomy to its Albanians. But once KLA veterans acting as policemen start to patrol Kosovo, the rising expectations of Macedonia's Albanians will be impossible to contain.

If the principle of full autonomy for minorities, leading to secession, is imposed on Serbia, it will not be demanded by the Hungarians in Romania who are more numerous than Kosovo's Albanians? What will stop the Russians in other republics from following suit?

In the next week or so President Milosevic may give in to pressure: he manipulates these crises to preserve his power. With each new surrender he is temporarily converted by the

West from the Beast of the Balkans into the Necessary Partner. Yet again, at home, he will point defeat as victory, because he will get a figleaf in the form of a few Russian battalions or a few European millions. This outcome would be awful for Serbia. The nation should lose its tyrant, not its borders. It should stand and fall before Nato, rather than slink into a dog kennel for voluntary vivisection.

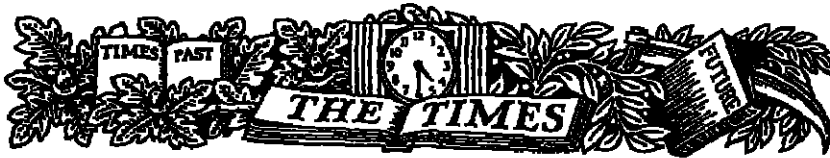
Another Milosevic surrender would also be bad because we need a good, loud argument within the Western alliance about American policy in the Balkans. It is not coherent diplomacy to allow Mr Milosevic to handle every crisis as a tool for domestic survival. And we need to appreciate that American support for intervention in Kosovo is influenced by selfish interests. An autonomous American military and political power-

base in southeastern Europe would be an asset which would not depend on the future ups and downs of Washington's relations with Germany's Red-Green coalition and France's Eurocentrists.

"Most friendships, Sir" — as Dr Johnson reminded Boswell — "are mere leagues in vice, or conspiracies in folly." In politics they are invariably both. They also tend to end stickily for one or both parties. As Tony Blair prepares to follow Bill Clinton on yet another joyride, he would do well to remember the example of poor Che left out to dry by Fidel Castro. If he does not think again the real, literal victims will be thousands of young Serbs, Albanians, and Nato servicemen.

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WANTED, OFFICE CLEANER

What should be written on the EU's 'clean slate'

Jacques Santer's morning-after defiance has given way to what may appear to be a more contrite, and politically realistic, admission that the party really is over. The Commission now says that it has "neither the desire nor intention to remain in office longer than necessary" and will, while it stays, launch no new policy initiatives.

But this apparently humble bow to the inevitable requires translation. The denizens of this self-regarding world assume that the less this doomed Commission does, the keener governments will be to get a new one up and running — and the more likely they are to ignore the Maastricht treaty's legal ban on reappointing commissioners who have resigned, and to rehire nearly all of this discredited *équipe*.

If Tony Blair joins other governments in doing this, even as an interim measure, then he should have the grace to concede that in the backscratching world of EU politicking, there is no such thing as a clean slate. He will have colluded in making accountability a farce.

One thing at least is clear: Mr Santer himself will be run out of town. Names are circulating, notably including the Nato Secretary-General, Javier Solana, and Romano Prodi, the wry economist who, against all expectations, pushed through just enough fiscal and budgetary reform to squeeze Italy into the single currency.

The odds are on Signor Prodi, not for the best reasons, but the worst. His credentials — an honest mien, more steel than his homely style suggests, and seriousness about cleaning up Italian politics — are less germane than the fact that it would suit the current Prime Minister, Massimo D'Alema, to see the back of him. In the European Parliament elections, Signor Prodi's new political movement, backed by the "clean hands" magistrate Antonio di Pietro, is expected to pick up enough of the vote to split the Italian left.

Small wonder then that Signor d'Alema

is pushing his candidature hard, as a "now or never" opportunity. But although Signor Prodi's reforming zeal is undoubtedly good for Italy, he might be less ideal in Brussels than Mr Blair imagines. He is a convinced federalist. In the great question before the EU, whether Brussels will drive integration forward or allow more room for national identity, he would have a much less open mind than, for example, Giuliano Amato, another able Italian ex-Prime Minister esteemed for his personal probity.

It would be best, although it will not happen, if governments were to require all candidate to set out their strategies for reform. For the key question is not how to break with the shoddy Santer years, but how to dismantle the structures and outlook shaped by the formidable Jacques Delors. It was under M Delors, who boasted in the 1980s that within a decade, 80 per cent of all key policy decisions would be taken in Brussels, that the European Commission closed its tentacles over domains that it should never have usurped. Even without the scandals he let fester, Mr Santer was a disaster because he did not keep his promise to cut the Brussels coat to a more modest measure of cloth.

If the Commission is to win the respect of the public, it has not only to shed its arrogance and clean house. It must put a stop to the odious intrusiveness that people rightly resent. That calls for a warrior-President, courageous and skilled enough to hobble if not slay the EU's most sacred cow — the doctrine of *acquis communautaire* which dictates that once Brussels has inserted its finger in a pot, it never removes it. The Commission needs to become more like the Europe that people live in, with all its national idiosyncrasies, traditions and pride, than the homogenised "Europe" of the *enarques*. "Je suis un top-downer," M Delors once revealingly said, in four words that sum up what is wrong. It will be hard, enormously hard, to put right.

WELCOME BAC

The fluctuating currency market in exams

The A level, the Gold Standard of secondary education, has survived to late middle age, despite signs that it has succumbed to creeping "grade inflation". Later this week the Government will reveal plans to shore up its value. But some schools are already turning their back on A levels, investing instead in the International Baccalaureate. Pluralism and choice, in exams as elsewhere, are healthy. Yet will these changes devalue the A level as a qualification?

The foundations of the A level have been mined from all sides. Left-wing critics claim that it is elitist. From the right comes the grave accusation that the relentless rise in the number of students with good A levels is not a sign that the nation has become brighter, but rather that the exams are easier. Employers complain that it furnishes too narrow an educational base.

The import of the International Baccalaureate may be evidence of how bad the situation has become. Yet its arrival is good news. The *Bac* addresses many of the A level's faults. It is broad: students select six subjects, spanning the arts and sciences. It offers depth: at least three of the six subjects are taken at a level equivalent to A levels. The marking system, which awards points, distinguishes students' ability more clearly than grades. It has been tried and tested in 100 countries; and schools such as Sevenoaks like its rigour.

Ministers prefer tinkering with the A level to its wholesale ejection. They are right. The A level still has strengths although it needs reform. Plans circulating in Whitehall would allow students to study up to five subjects in the first sixth-form year and take Advanced Supplementary exams in each of the subjects, some split into modules. At the end of the year,

students would be able to drop one or two of the subjects, and concentrate on the remainder for the final A-level exam.

This solution aims to please everyone, promising greater breadth but defending the existing depth of study. Examining pupils at the end of their first sixth-form year will help universities decide which applicants should be offered places. Yet there are potential downsides. The stealthy advance of modules can fragment a subject's integrity. Being appraised on a bite-sized chunk of knowledge is less challenging than sitting an end-of-year exam. Although an AS level is taken in half the time of an A level, the first year of a course is less academically demanding than the second. The weighting of results for the two exams should reflect this.

Some teaching unions may oppose these plans for different reasons, alleging insufficient teachers, resources and hours in the day to teach five, not three subjects. They should see the merit in offering children greater breadth of study, even if that does mean a longer school day. Sixth-form students are at their desks for 18 hours a week, 12 hours fewer than their German or French counterparts. A more relevant concern is how these reforms will cater for brighter pupils. Creating an A-starred grade would simply turn the current A grade into a B. A better solution would be to introduce a more challenging exam which, unlike the S level, tests students' knowledge and understanding of the A-level syllabus to a greater depth.

Broadening the range without diluting standards is a difficult trick. A well devised AS level could correct many deficiencies of the current system. But if universities and employers see AS levels as undermining A levels, the Gold Standard will suffer the fate of any over-valued currency.

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER

Citizenship for Britain's last colonial subjects

It has been a long time dying, but Robin Cook's announcement that Britain's remaining colonial subjects will be granted full citizenship should at last lay the Empire to rest. Fifty-two years after India won independence, and two years after Hong Kong was handed over to China, the peoples of the 13 territories that chose to continue flying the Union Jack are finally to be treated as equals. Mr Cook is extending the right to live and work in Britain to 150,000 mostly non-white people living on islands which were once staging-posts on colonial shipping routes. Until now, these rights were enjoyed only by the Falkland Islands and Gibraltar, whose inhabitants are mostly white.

Other British islanders resented being fobbed off, in 1981, with a lesser post-imperial status that forced them to get visas to visit London and work permits to look for jobs here. The removal of citizenship was an unprincipled measure, taken largely to stop Hong Kong's 3.5 million mainly Chinese holders of British National Overseas Passports coming to Britain. The bitterness it caused came into the open after the volcanic eruption in Montserrat in 1997, when islanders accused Britain of giving them too little help to stay but, until policy was hurriedly changed, denying them the right to live in this country.

Reform has been delayed by old-style thinking on both sides. Some Caribbean territories have been slow to accept the responsibilities that go with full citizenship. In particular, they have dragged their heels over enacting tough new legislation, in line with Britain's, against money laundering — an issue Britain will review with them at the end of 1999.

The Home Office, for its part, was reluctant to make an exception to its immigration policies. Its point was not that granting citizenship to islanders would flood Britain with immigrants. Two thirds of the new citizens live on prosperous Caribbean islands and have little reason to move. What the Home Office demanded was reciprocity, the right for mainland British nationals to settle in the islands. Fearing their tiny economies would be swamped, the territories refused. Mr Cook persuaded the Home Office to back down.

Full citizenship will put the finishing touch to his broader plan to update London's relationship with colonies acquired as far back as the 1600s. The islands already have more access to Whitehall, and a minister and department in London to look after their interests. Mr Cook is to be commended for seeking a "modernised partnership"; and for a White Paper that elegantly rights a colonial wrong.

'Blunt instrument' of motoring taxes

From Mr Martin Bennett

Sir, Although British fuel and vehicle excise taxes may be generally higher than on the Continent (letters, March 15), this does not translate into correspondingly higher total motoring costs, as anyone who has travelled on France's toll-charging autoroutes will know.

The principle behind the fuel duty escalator is to build into motoring costs a greater proportion of the external costs which are caused by motoring but incurred by society and the environment generally. The effect is intended to be to reduce the volume of petrol and diesel-fuelled road traffic to only what can genuinely be justified by the economic benefits which it creates, without hidden subsidy.

The problem is that our Government is attempting to achieve this only through the blunt proxy of vehicle and fuel taxes. As the road industry is now demonstrating, these can be easily avoided.

It has been estimated that if all external social costs of motoring were factored into the fuel price alone, this would at least double its present level. The need is to design an alternative method of taxation which is less easily avoided. Taxation through road-use pricing, while still less than ideal, would be preferable to duties on fuel, and avoid loss of UK business and taxes.

Yours faithfully,
MARTIN BENNETT,
Environmental Management
Accounting Group,
University of Wolverhampton,
Compton Road West,
Wolverhampton WV3 9DX.
martin.bennett@compuserve.com
March 15.

From Mr Roger Sainsbury, FEng,
President of The Institution of
Civil Engineers

Sir, The Chancellor is understandably the subject of complaint by the road transport industry for having encouraged competition from other countries by his huge increase in the licence charges for lorries. But to focus on the charge alone is misguided.

This institution has for some years advocated the progressive increase of fuel duty for both cars and lorries. Albeit a blunt instrument, this will encourage the development of more efficient engines, evaluation of a switch to rail, and consideration of whether a journey is really necessary.

To increase the standing charge on a vehicle does not increase its marginal cost in use and is thus a poor incentive. On the contrary, the higher the standing charge the greater the propensity to drive the vehicle to gain value from that charge. It is the use of vehicles, not their existence, which threatens the environment. On these grounds, there has long been a good case for putting the whole amount of any environmental levy on to fuel prices and doing away with the licence fee.

The environmental benefit from dearer fuel will be lessened by the ability to buy more cheaply on the other side of the Channel. The Chancellor and Deputy Prime Minister should both press our European partners to demonstrate their green credentials in this matter.

Yours faithfully,
ROGER SAINSBURY,
President,
The Institution of Civil Engineers,
One Great George Street, SW1P 3AA.
March 17.

From the Chairman of the Forest
Industry Council and others

Sir, We endorse the views of your correspondents today. Road fuel is an inescapable and essential prime cost of timber production and, despite our pleas, the Chancellor seems bent on destroying our industry.

In rural industry, road transport is an absolute necessity. In some European countries the cost of fuel is half that in the UK. A recent external industry review stated that the cost base of UK forestry had to be cut to be competitive. How can we compete in the face of this ever-increasing tax burden?

Additionally, the increase in vehicle excise duty on five-axle vehicles is so severe that many small rural hauliers will be unable to continue business.

Yours faithfully,
ANDREW CHRISTIE-MILLER,
Chairman, Forest Industry Council,
ROGER HAY,
Chairman,
Forestry Contracting Association,
RICHARD SOCHACKI,
Chairman,
Association of Professional Foresters,
LEN YULL,
Chairman, Timber Growers Association,
c/o Association of Professional Foresters,
7-9 West Street, Belford,
Northumberland NE70 7QA.
March 15.

From Canon Roy Arnold

Sir, Is the Europe which is attracting road hauliers and other business leaders to "re-flag" because of cheaper taxation over there the same Europe which they do not wish us to join because of EU social legislation and higher taxes?

Yours etc,
ROY ARNOLD,
49 Crossfield Road, Bollington,
Macclesfield, Cheshire SK10 5EA.
March 15.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Hit or miss ways to repel sharks

From Rear-Admiral
Sir Richard Trowbridge

Sir, I write with reference to Jack Palmer's letter (March 10; see also letters, March 13) concerning the action to be taken against attacking sharks.

We grandfathers must hold together and the incredulity of the young and I hasten to support his claim concerning the differing defensive methods to be taken against various types of sharks. I well recall that such a notice was displayed in HM ships in the Far East in the early 1950s and that it caused much amusement and disbelief.

However, I must confess that after more than 40 years in the Royal Navy, I never met nor did I ever hear of anyone actually punching a shark on the nose, but perhaps this is because that was the wrong action to take against that particular fish and the person concerned never lived to tell the tale.

Yours truly,
RICHARD TROWBRIDGE,
Old Idsworth Garden,
Finchdean, Waterlooville,
Hampshire PO8 0BA.
March 16.

From Mr Michael Jefferson

Sir, In 1951, while serving in the Royal Navy in the Fleet Air Arm, I was sent to the United States to train with the US Navy, where I was provided with a package prominently labelled "shark repellent", attached to my Mae West.

I have a very strong suspicion that this contrivance was — like the punch-a-shark advice — a psychological anomaly to comfort those who had the misfortune to find themselves in shark-infested waters. My suspicions were confirmed when a member of my training squadron ditched in the Gulf of Mexico, and thought it prudent to scatter his packaged repellent about his dinghy, only to be immediately joined by a variety of sharks.

Fortunately, his sound good sense, diffidence and desire to survive prevented him from punching any of them.

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL JEFFERSON,
21 Hollow Lane, Hayling Island,
Hampshire PO11 9AA.
March 11.

From Mr Piotr Nye

Sir, While I cannot claim to be an admiral, I would be happy to corroborate Jack Palmer's letter about punching sharks on the nose. I have often

performed this trick, in the course of scuba diving among various types of sharks, and hand-feeding sharks for the benefit of scuba-diving tourists.

Scuba divers are generally much safer from shark attack than surface swimmers. Sharks usually circle their potential prey, and one can tell fairly easily whether a nearby shark is contemplating an attack. They also have a distinct body language that betrays their mood, usually giving enough warning to allow one to leave the area unmolested.

Some subspecies, such as the tiger shark, can be territorial, and will make several warning displays before attacking. Swimming on the surface, of course, one is usually ignorant of such underwater warnings, while the erratic splashing noises signify prey to many sharks.

If a punch to the nose is needed, it is important to use the correct technique — the arm bent at right angles and raised horizontally, the back of the fist pointing away. A swift back-fist punch minimises the chance of your fist following through off the nose into the open jaws.

Kind regards,
PIOTR NIE,
38c Montpelier Spa Road,
Cheltenham,
Gloucestershire GL50 1UL.
March 15.

From Mr John Cheyne

Sir, As a child, I hardly dared look at a particular sequence of photographs in *The Silent World* by Jacques Cousteau.

The sequence shows a grey shark turn and approach the camera. In the final picture, the shark is still coming and its head almost fills the frame. The caption reads: "The shark is 2ft away. Then I bang his nose with the camera."

Yours faithfully,
JOHN CHEYNE,
Walnut Farm,
East Dundry, Bristol BS41 8NH.
March 12.

From Alan Brown

Sir, I have been reading *Underwater Adventure* by Willard Price, in which Hal and Roger Hunt punched a blue and white mako shark on the nose to stop it attacking them.

It swam away but came back again very angry, so it is a good thing Mr Palmer didn't have to try this himself.

Yours faithfully,
ALAN BROWN (aged 9),
45 Wellesley Road,
Clacton-on-Sea, Essex CO15 3PN.
March 10.

Full-time motherhood

From Ms Fiona Clarke

Sir, Your article, "Want a baby? Read this first" (March 12), had me shouting at the newspaper (something I usually reserve for the radio).

If one lives in a flat in town and buys an Old English sheepdog, it is pretty clear that one is ignorant of the size and nature of the responsibility. Does that mean owning a dog is universally problematical?

When I had my children, I knew all about the noise, the dirty nappies, the sleepless nights, the avalanche of accessories. I was a career woman with a fulfilling life and I fully intended to return to work as soon as possible. What I was unprepared for was how much I loved being a mother and enjoyed the company of babies.

Eight years later, I am still a full-time mother, with three children. My husband, who married me on the basis that we weren't going to have

children, jokes about wanting his money back.

Being a full-time mother is not valued by society — at parties, owning up to it is the quickest way to lose people. If you have chosen to devote your time to raising the next generation they assume you are too stupid or indolent to do anything else.

I think this comes as a shock, in particular to women young enough not to have established themselves in a career. I am still, after eight years, driven to talking about what I used to do as a way of getting people to take me seriously.

Despite having done a number of different jobs, motherhood is, for me, the most challenging, enjoyable, and undervalued occupation in the world. Don't knock it.

Yours faithfully,
FIONA CLARKE,
11 Fairfield Road,
Uxbridge, Middlesex UB8 1AX.
March 13.

Spontaneous rhetoric

From Mr Johan Schloemann

Sir, Simon Jenkins (article, March 12) rightly insists that the art of speech-making is more than reading out a text, and that nowadays few are capable of speaking extemporaneously.

The same claim was made in the 4th century BC by the rhetorician and sophist Alcibiades, who deplored the (newly introduced) written preparation of speeches and pointed out that an off-the-cuff speech can much better react to the audience and the needs of the moment.

This tension between preparation and improvisation (on the early history of which I am preparing a dissertation) has been present in the art of rhetoric ever since.

Yours sincerely,
JOHAN SCHLOEMANN,
Postdammer Strasse 168, 10783 Berlin.
johan.schloemann@studnet.hu-berlin.de
March 13.

Once and for all

From District Judge Helen Wood

Sir, I note from your report of the visit of the Prince of Wales to Sea Lion Island (March 16) that the two human inhabitants, a man and his wife, emigrated there from North Yorkshire 25 years ago. Even so, can there ever be such a thing as a "former Yorkshireman", as the caption to your photograph (earlier editions) put it?

Yours faithfully,
HELEN WOOD,
Pontefract County Court,
Pontefract WF6 1RJ.
March 17.

Volunteer help

From the Director General
of the British Red Cross

Sir, Libby Purves is right to raise the issue of the impact on our society from a decline in volunteers (article, "St John seeks a face-lift", Weekend, March 13).

It is hard to imagine what would happen if agencies like the British Red Cross stopped providing services such as taking people home from hospital, lending medical equipment or supporting victims of fire, floods and other disasters.

This is "the dirty work", as Libby Purves calls it, which currently occupies the attentions of 86,000 British Red Cross volunteers who offer care to people in crisis.

It is at times of crisis when the volunteers of the British Red Cross and St John Ambulance are most needed. The two organisations worked very closely together, for instance, providing support to the victims of the Omagh bombing.

Volunteers are often the unsung heroes of society. Maybe we should all take time out to say thank you next time we see volunteers in action, and consider joining their ranks.

Yours faithfully,
SAM YOUNGER,
Director General,
British Red Cross,
9 Grosvenor Crescent, SW1X 7EJ.
March 15.

Letters to the Editor for publication should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — 0171-782 5046 — or by e-mail to: letters@the-times.co.uk

Limits imposed on medical training

From Lord McColl

Sir, The Privy Council is currently considering the representation from the Education Committee of the General Medical Council to withdraw recognition of the United Examining Board. The GMC has concluded that the standard required of medical students taking the board's examination is "not sufficient". But the committee has ignored requests from the board to specify the deficiencies and how they could be corrected.

In all the arguments I have seen about this matter, it has not been brought to the public's attention that there are advantages in having the board, as well as the universities, that can dispense medical qualifications. Some universities are at times inflexible, in which case the board can provide the answer.

Perhaps this could best be illustrated by the case some 12 years ago of a medical student at Guy's who broke his neck during a game of rugby and was paralysed in both legs and partly in his arms. His university refused to allow him to qualify with a degree but the board did allow him to take the examination, which he passed. He has been a triumph in the disability world, providing valuable leadership.

Another important reason for the continued recognition of the board is that it provides the only route for refugee doctors coming to the United Kingdom to qualify and obtain full registration; otherwise they would have to go through the entire medical school training.

The United Examining Board is run by highly reputable doctors and provides an important service to this country. I think that the General Medical Council Education Committee's representation is wrong, and I very much hope that the Privy Council will turn it down.

Yours faithfully,
IAN MCCOLL,
(Professor of Surgery, Guy's, 1971-98),
House of Lords.
March 17.

Library closure

From Professor Lauro Martinez

Sir, The Reading Rooms of the British Library are now in their second week of closure, owing to industrial action, and there is no solution in sight (letter, March 16). Library management seem unable to find the £50,000 to content the 120 library assistants (5 per cent of staff) who actually fetch books for readers.

Could the trouble be that almost all the funds available for services and salaries now go to the red-jacketed wardens, into "security" equipment and to other new services for non-readers, as well as to make good the heavy costs already disbursed to outside "consultants"? The interests of readers seem to be coming second to the need to serve and keep an eye on the non-readers who pour into the new building every day.

In their current handout management proudly boast that it is "the world's leading national research library". If so, when are they going to understand that their sole reason for existence as managers is, ultimately, in the activities of reading and research?

Yours faithfully,
LAURO MARTINEZ,
8 Gloucester Crescent, NW1 7DS.
March 16.

Worldly wisdom

From Mr David J. Cowan

Sir, Congratulations on your choice of text for the day after the Budget (March 10): "We didn't bring anything into this world and we won't take anything with us when we leave" (1 Timothy, vi. 7). This serves to put all material matters in their proper place and in the context of eternity.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID J. COWAN,
Cowan & Wood (solicitors),
114 South Street,
Dorking, Surrey RH4 2EZ.
March 15.

Prayer and shopping

From Mr Edward C. Wilson

Sir, If my wife's comments on my shopping are anything to go by, the prayer (letter, March 13) should also include: "You have left unbought those things which you ought to have bought."

Yours faithfully,
EDWARD C. WILSON,
19 Castle Meadow,
Sible Hedingham, Essex CO9 3JZ.
March 15.

Wedding gifts

From Monsignor
Graham P. M. Adams

Sir, When I am invited as a guest to a wedding, I send every couple the same gift (feature, "Every wedding list tells a story", March 16). They receive bathroom scales with the message, "May your way in life be happy and blessed."

Yours sincerely,
GRAHAM P. M. ADAMS,
The Presbytery,
Aston-le-Walls, Daventry NN11 6UF.
March 16.

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OBITUARIES

CHRISTOPHER YORK

Christopher York, landowner and former Conservative MP, died on March 13 aged 89. He was born on July 27, 1909.

A YORKSHIRE landowner and farmer, Christopher York was MP for Ripon, 1959-64, and Harrogate, 1964-69. A diligent backbencher, he never achieved office, nor really wanted to, but in the post-war period he was a frequent spokesman for his party on agriculture and was admired as a hardworking constituency MP.

Christopher York was the son of Colonel Edward York of Hutton Hall, Long Marston, near York, a considerable North Riding landowner. He was educated at Eton from where he went to Sandhurst and was commissioned into The Royal Dragoons, serving in India. But after four years he left the Army as a lieutenant to qualify himself as a land agent and equip himself for the administration of the family estate. In 1937 he took over the management of his father's property at Long Marston.

His thoughts were also turning to politics. He had for some time been chairman of the Yorkshire Federation of the Junior Imperial League and at a by-election at Ripon early in 1939 he easily held the seat in that staunchly Conservative agricultural heartland. At that stage he was a firm supporter of Neville Chamberlain's appeasement policies in the House of Commons, but when war came a few months later he was re-employed by the Army in the rank of temporary major, and served as a billeting officer in The Royal Dragoons for the remainder of the war.

His House of Commons career did not, therefore, really begin until the end of the war. Ripon, then regarded as one of the safest Tory seats in the country was not affected by the electoral landslide which swept Labour into power and he was able for the next nine years to represent local agricultural interests from the back benches, from 1950 for Harrogate.

York was a conscientious MP and consistently over-worked himself. His health, never strong, gave way and in the early 1950s his doctors repeatedly warned him to slow down his workload. In 1958 he resigned his seat and retired to farm and manage his Hutton Wandesley estate, at the same time devoting himself to local public life. He was appointed a Deputy Lieutenant of the West Riding of Yorkshire in 1954 and High Sheriff of Yorkshire in 1966.

He served as President of the Royal Agricultural Society of England in 1979 and had been made an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Veterinary College in 1971.

Christopher York is survived by his wife Pauline, whom he married in 1934, and by his son and three daughters.

Peregrine Fellowes, diplomat and Arabist, died on February 15 aged 86. He was born on July 8, 1912.

BORN into the now lost culture of Empire, Peregrine Fellowes grew up with the sense of duty of an Englishman abroad. One of his great uncles, Lord Sydenham, was Governor of Bombay, another, Sir Thomas Wright, supplied rail equipment to the whole of the Indian sub-continent, while his father's brother, Air Commodore Peregrine Fellowes, led the Houston Everest Flight of 1933.

His father had decided to try his hand at ranching, but when he and his pregnant wife arrived at their holding near Calgary in Canada they made the unwelcome discovery that their agent had absconded with the money intended for a new house. As a result, Peregrine was born in a stable, for which, as he would often observe, there was an excellent precedent.

After his father's death in the First World War, his mother's next marriage, in 1923, brought Catholicism in its wake. Although his conversion was denounced by his father's family, his education at Ampleforth (where his step-uncle Father Herbert Byrne would be Abbot) and his new faith proved a mainspring throughout his life.

Having graduated as a civil engineer from University College London, Fellowes was asked to supervise bridge construction in the Sudan. Believing the job to depend on the assumption that he was a bachelor, he concealed the existence of his wife for the first few months, until he discovered that her presence would merely secure him a larger bungalow. She quickly joined him, and merriment ensued in the pre-war playgrounds of the Sudan, South Africa and Kenya.

When hostilities broke out in 1939, his knowledge of Africa led to his inclusion in a small group with a secret mission to regain the Ethiopian throne for Emperor Haile Selassie. Fellowes had some odd jobs. He was responsible for the Mobile Propaganda Unit, a printing press borne by two camels. This was used to print appeals to the Italians, which were pushed over the barbed wire on bayonets, and, according to legend, frequently resulted in surrender.

Various peculiar orders were received, of which Fellowes's own favourite was the instruction to accord the Emperor every formal mark of deference but only to address him as Mr Smith. The whole (successful) endeavour was chronicled by George Steer in his book, *Sealed and Delivered*, published in 1942.

At the end of the war, Fellowes became a diplomat, and a friend and colleague of Kim Philby. During the late 1940s he was also posted to Cairo with Guy Burgess and Donald Maclean. One of his duties was to work with Guy Burgess, decoding sensitive information, all of which was presumably relayed to Moscow. Although horrified by his friend's treason, Fellowes was never quite able to suppress his affection for Burgess, one of the funniest men he ever knew. Having worked with all three spies, he could

PEREGRINE FELLOWES



Fellowes during his war service in Ethiopia

only assume that he had been investigating as a possible "fourth man". If he was, nothing but old-fashioned patriotism would have been discovered.

His diplomatic career was halted, however, when a wartime attack of tuberculosis flared up in the 1950s, bringing a medical verdict that he could not expect to live beyond 1960. Reluctantly the Foreign Office declined to train him for an ambassadorial role — a disappointment only slightly assuaged, over the years, by his outliving most of his diplomatic contemporaries.

Deeply distressed, he was persuaded by his wife to accompany her to a fortune-teller who, perhaps by previous arrangement, declared that he would live until the age of 72, which still sold him short, but was at least more accurate and encouraging than

the outset a member of the Volkskammer (East German parliament). From 1949 he was Secretary of the *Kulturband*, the office for culture, and from 1957 to 1966 the head of the Aufbau Verlag, to this day a significant literary publishing house.

In 1966 he was made Minister of Culture. In that office, if he was not able to push out the frontiers he nevertheless had the ability to rein in the worst effects of hard-line Stalinism. Asked by a young producer why Andrei Tarkovsky's film *Stalker* could not be shown, he characteristically laughed, clapped the young man on the shoulder and said: "Don't worry, my boy, just wait long enough and we'll have to back down."

In 1973 he was sent as Ambassador to Rome. There, he was popular and enjoyed the company of the Italian cultural elite — cardinals not excluded — much more than that of his comrades at home. His proverbial love of women fitted notions of *la dolce vita* a lot better than the puritanism of the Party. He fathered seven children by a number of liaisons.

In 1979 he was briefly Secretary of the GDR Committee for Security and Co-operation, the Helsinki Treaty process. It was after this that he was called by Honecker to the office of Secretary of State for Church Affairs.

Gysi was no hero and after his political downfall publicly acknowledged that he had served "the red god" for too long. Housebound after a stroke throughout his last years, he was cared for by his much younger secretary wife with tender devotion.

He is survived by his wife and his seven children, one of whom, Gregor Gysi, is the parliamentary leader of the Party of Democratic Socialism, the successor to the East German Communist Party.

KLAUS GYSI



Gysi: attempted to tame East Germany's churches

Klaus Gysi, East German publisher, diplomat and politician died in Berlin on March 6 aged 87. He was born there on March 3, 1912.

AN ABLE diplomat and politician, in the 1960s Klaus Gysi, as Secretary of State for Church Affairs, was given the task by the East German leader Erich Honecker of trying to tame the former German Democratic Republic's Protestant Churches and prevent them from criticising the country's Communist regime. In the event he had been handed a poisoned chalice and though he prided himself on his diplomatic savoir faire, he ended up promising Lutheran Church leaders more than he could deliver, and got himself sacked in the process.

The East German churches, mainly Lutheran, had been a permanent thorn in the side of the regime. But Gysi, a renowned conciliator, thought

he could win them over and bring them into line with the political establishment. He was convinced that the GDR's relatively liberal religious policies were far superior to those of Moscow. Indeed, in May 1968, addressing the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London — itself an unprecedented event for a Soviet bloc minister — he proudly, if somewhat self-deludingly, described his liberal church policy as a "great historic experiment".

But he was bound to fail, and as Communist power began to crumble, the Protestant Church provided the support needed to express popular discontent. In 1988, at the millennium celebration of the Russian Orthodox Church in Moscow, Gysi rashly promised the presiding East German Lutheran bishop a meeting with the Party's top leadership to iron out differences. But he had not consulted the

Prime Minister, Willi Stoph, and on his return home he was summarily dismissed by the Politburo.

On July 13 that year the press announced his retirement "on health grounds". That evening he went to a reception at the Italian Embassy and smilingly greeted his host with the words: "Mr

Ambassador, I'm sure you can see how ill I am."

Gysi was an untypical member of the *nomenklatura*, the establishment of the GDR. With Swiss antecedents and a Jewish grandparent, he grew up in a middle-class intellectual environment. His father was a doctor who chose to serve the poorest of Berlin's poor. At 16 he joined the Young Communist League.

He studied economics in Frankfurt, Paris, Innsbruck and Berlin but in 1935 — being both partly Jewish and a Communist — he fled from Hitler's Germany to France. Interned briefly when the Second World War started, he then went underground, working first with the French Resistance and later, even more dangerously, in Berlin itself.

In 1945 he was appointed Mayor of the West Berlin borough of Zehlendorf, but a year later began a long, colourful career in East German public life. In the drab greyne of East Berlin bureaucracy, this physically very small, witty iconoclast was an unusual figure whose gently cynical and rather Jewish sense of humour never left him.

He began as editor of the cultural journal *Aufbau* ("Reconstruction") and was from

the outset a member of the Volkskammer (East German parliament). From 1949 he was Secretary of the *Kulturband*, the office for culture, and from 1957 to 1966 the head of the Aufbau Verlag, to this day a significant literary publishing house.

In 1966 he was made Minister of Culture. In that office, if he was not able to push out the frontiers he nevertheless had the ability to rein in the worst effects of hard-line Stalinism. Asked by a young producer why Andrei Tarkovsky's film *Stalker* could not be shown, he characteristically laughed, clapped the young man on the shoulder and said: "Don't worry, my boy, just wait long enough and we'll have to back down."

In 1973 he was sent as Ambassador to Rome. There, he was popular and enjoyed the company of the Italian cultural elite — cardinals not excluded — much more than that of his comrades at home. His proverbial love of women fitted notions of *la dolce vita* a lot better than the puritanism of the Party. He fathered seven children by a number of liaisons.

In 1979 he was briefly Secretary of the GDR Committee for Security and Co-operation, the Helsinki Treaty process. It was after this that he was called by Honecker to the office of Secretary of State for Church Affairs.

Gysi was no hero and after his political downfall publicly acknowledged that he had served "the red god" for too long. Housebound after a stroke throughout his last years, he was cared for by his much younger secretary wife with tender devotion.

He is survived by his wife and his seven children, one of whom, Gregor Gysi, is the parliamentary leader of the Party of Democratic Socialism, the successor to the East German Communist Party.

DENIS MORRIS

Denis Morris, OBE, former Controller of the BBC Light Programme, died on March 8 aged 91. He was born on June 29, 1907.

DENIS MORRIS brought a great enthusiasm to everything from playing rugby to local council work, BBC management and wine-writing.

He was educated at Tonbridge School, but left before his talent for rugby and cricket had had a chance to develop. For a few years he worked at the family leather firm of George Morris, during which time he had great fun standing in as a signman on the London to Brighton and South Coast Railway in the General Strike.

He also played for Blackheath RFC, and then for Lyons while spending a year there learning about tanning. Later he played for the Leicester Tigers, and on one occasion he was "carded" by both Leicester and Blackheath for the same game.

He was lured into the advertising business as assistant to one of the directors of Ogilvy & Mather for a short time, but returned to the family firm to work in the Leicester office. During this period he served on Leicester City Council, defeating a Labour incumbent who was due to be made Lord Mayor three days later.

After he retired from the game he began broadcasting about rugby and cricket in his spare time, which led to his joining the BBC Midlands Region as a talks producer in 1936. He began the *Listeners Answer Back* programme, one of the earliest of its kind.

During the war he was director of the Midlands Region of the Ministry of Information — one of the earliest public relations officers — and among other things he was involved in showing George VI round Coventry after the devastating raid of November 1940.

He returned to the BBC in Birmingham in 1943 as programme director, a position he held until 1960. During this time he encouraged many producers including Charles Parker, the inventor of the radio ballad, whose *John Axon G.M.* won the Italia Prize, radio's most coveted award. He was also instrumental in the birth of *The Archers* and helped to plan the death of

Grace Archer, which was arranged to coincide with the first night of the new ITV service as a rival attraction. He also did a certain amount of broadcasting himself.

He moved to London in 1960 as chief and subsequently controller of the Light Programme, from which he retired in 1967, having overseen the setting up of Radios 1 and 2. He was happy to be a maverick against the complacency of those at the top of the BBC, whom he saw as "in some ways dedicated and marvellous and in others exceedingly pompous".

His first book, *Poultry Keeping for Profit and Pleasure*, the result of a hobby that helped to pay for four sets of school fees, had appeared in 1949 and introduced the cartoonist Thelwell to the world. He also wrote *The French Vineyards in*



1958 after spending three months' leave of absence from the BBC travelling around France with his wife.

He spent 20 years as the wine correspondent of *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Field*, which led to two more books. He also found time to produce the first of many reports on the future of cricket for the MCC (he had been a keen club cricketer for the likes of the Sussex Martlets and the Gentlemen of Leicestershire); to serve on the public relations committee of the Test and County Cricket Board; to act as deputy chairman of the Lord's Taverners' council; to chair the Shoreham Conservative Association and twice act as its president; and to sit on the committee of the St Francis and Lady Chichester Hospitals.

He married twice. His first marriage, from which he had a son who pre-deceased him, was dissolved in 1942. He married Catherine Garrett in 1943 and she survives him, together with their son.

JOSEPH RANK

Joseph Rank, businessman, died on February 10 aged 80. He was born on April 24, 1918.

HAVING joined a small family business before the war, Joseph Rank left the large combine Ranks Hovis McDougall as chairman in 1981 with some 52,000 employees worldwide. He understood that the business must not overestimate public taste. "The white sliced loaf is what the housewife wants," he said — and it is what she got.

Educated at the Wells House, Malvern Wells, and Loretto, Joseph Rank was the grandson of the new Rank Hovis McDougall. In 1968 the company acquired the Cerebus Group, including branded names such as Bisto, Paxo stuffing, Saxa and Sifta salt, Scotts Porridge Oats, Aora sult, Chesswoods mushrooms and the Shawford label. In the 1970s, under Rank's chairmanship these overseas interests were consolidated, with worldwide grocery acquisitions.

Rank maintained a close involvement with the governing body of the Royal Alexandra and Albert School from 1952 and with the Royal College of Physicians, where he became an honorary fellow in 1978. He was the first High Sheriff of East Sussex (1974-75).

He is survived by his wife, Moira, only surviving child of 3rd Baron Southborough, and by their son and daughter.

that had been bomb damaged during the war.

Declining flour consumption threatened the future of the business, as did the Allied Bakeries Group, which had acquired several British plant bakeries. The decision was taken to buy suitable bakery businesses and Rank became immersed in a major expansion of the group. Rank next acquired agricultural, merchant and feeding stuffs businesses to reduce the company's dependence on flour. Then, after the acquisition of Hovis-McDougall in 1965, Rank became the deputy chairman and chief executive of the new Rank Hovis McDougall.

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He is survived by his wife, Moira, only surviving child of 3rd Baron Southborough, and by their son and daughter.

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Rise in jobless boosts prospect of rate cut

By ALASDAIR MURRAY
ECONOMICS
CORRESPONDENT

UNEMPLOYMENT began to rise in February while wage growth cooled further, leaving the City confident that interest rate cuts remain on the agenda of the Bank of England.

The minutes of this month's meeting of the Bank's Monetary Policy Committee, out yesterday, also dispelled market fears that the Bank had called a halt to its rate-cutting spree.

Although only William Butler, an independent member of the committee, voted in favour of an immediate cut, the tone of the minutes suggested that the MPC still has a bias towards further easing.

Claimant count unemployment rose by 4,300 in February to 1.31 million. The Government's preferred International Labour Force measure of unemployment also ticked up by 37,000 to 1.84 million in the three months to January.

However, the size of the workforce again reached a record, rising 119,000 in the three months to January to 27.32 million. Analysts said that the apparent discrepancy in the figures reflected a continued influx into the labour force of people who are not claiming benefits.

The newly reinstated average earnings confirmed that wage inflation is cooling. The December headline fig-

LINKS

WEBSITE: www.bankofengland.co.uk/
Weekend Money website:
http://www.money-money.co.uk

ure fell from 4.5 per cent to 4.1 per cent, while the provisional January estimate of 4.2 per cent suggests wage growth is likely to slow further in coming months.

The rise in unemployment and decline in earnings growth brought an immediate response from business and unions, who argued that the door is now open for further rate cuts from the current 5.5 per cent.

The MPC March minutes revealed that the committee accepted that the strong pound, weaker than expected GDP growth and slowing wage inflation implied a "slightly lower prospective inflation than thought at the time of the February inflation report".

The Bank also displayed few concerns over the contents of the Budget, despite City fears that Gordon Brown's tax cuts could persuade the Bank to postpone further rate cuts. However, the slight improvement in survey readings led the committee to conclude there was not quite a "sufficient case" for a sixth consecutive cut.

The renewed hopes of interest rate cuts had little impact on the stock market, which followed Wall Street lower. The FTSE 100 index of leading shares closed down 61.3 points at 6,140.6.

The pound also lost ground against the euro but made modest gains against the dollar. The euro rose from 67.15p to 67.55p, while the pound climbed half a cent to \$1.6297.

FSA threatens to shut 12 top firms over bug

By CAROLINE MERRELL
BANKING
CORRESPONDENT

A DOZEN leading financial institutions have been put on notice by the chief City watchdog that they face closure because they are so far behind in their preparedness for dealing with the so-called millennium bug.

The Financial Services Authority (FSA) has written to 12 of the UK's biggest financial companies warning them that, in its opinion, their systems are not on track to be year 2000 compliant in time.

According to Michael Foot, managing director of financial supervision at the FSA, the institutions involved are either

"household names" or at least "very widely known" firms.

Mr Foot said: "In the last resort and where it is apparent there is no better way to protect depositors, investors, policyholders, or the integrity of markets, we will take action to restrict a firm's business or in extreme cases to remove its authorisation altogether."

Letters from the FSA to notified financial companies have demanded that they prove they are on track to be year 2000 compliant. The regulator says it has yet to receive any replies.

Mr Foot told a conference yesterday on the financial sector's year 2000 readiness that the 12 firms identified were from a total of 160 that are classified as "high impact" institu-

tions. The failure of a high impact company would have serious consequences for retail customers and the markets.

He refused to give the names of the companies for legal reasons although the high-impact group includes retail and investment banks, insurance companies and building societies.

The FSA has also written to another 50 companies, in the so-called "medium-impact" group, warning them that their systems are not up to scratch.

A spokesman for the FSA said that no organisation under its aegis is yet to have its "green" category of being 100 per cent millennium compliant.

According to figures to the end of 1998, 58 per cent of the high-impact groups were on

track and 35 per cent at "amber" — as yet behind but likely to get on track. In the medium-impact group, 40 per cent were on track, 45 per cent were at "red" — or non-compliant.

Mr Foot declined to give a specific deadline ahead of the turn of the year for initiating legal action against companies that were not millennium compliant.

He said: "With over nine months to go before the millennium the conditions to justify such measures have not yet manifested themselves. As the year goes on, however, time runs out."

The high-impact firms under threat have the capital to beat the millennium bug but have simply ignored the potential risks or have not seen it as

a serious threat to the market, Mr Foot said.

In the area of counterparty risk, implying situations where a UK company itself is compliant but can be affected by a non-compliant counterparty in another country, the FSA said it was advising firms on precautionary actions.

The British Bankers' Association disputed that its members, the retail banks, were facing problems. It said UK banks had recently been complimented by the US State Department on their readiness.

Barclays Bank said that its systems were at present 90 per cent compliant and would be ready by this summer.

Commentary, page 31



Michael Foot, the FSA's financial supervisor, said that the institutions concerned were either "household names" or "very widely known" firms

Mulcahy says no fresh deals in pipeline

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

KINGFISHER, the B&Q to Woolworths retail group, saw its underlying profits jump 15 per cent last year as it reaped the benefits of its rapid overseas expansion.

In what it called a "milestone year" the company merged its B&Q DIY arm with France's Castorama, creating Europe's largest DIY group. Expansion of the group's electricals business in France and Germany made it the third-largest European electricals retailer.

But Sir Geoffrey Mulcahy, chief executive, yesterday played down expectations that another deal, possibly in Germany, was imminent. "The number one priority is to concentrate on developing the businesses that we've got. Opportunities to expand are not entirely within our gift."

About 40 per cent of annualised sales are now from outside the UK, he said, and he expects the split to be even within two to three years.

Profits before exceptional items and tax in the year to January 30 — which includes one month of Castorama profits — rose from £505 million to £582.5 million on turnover up from £6.41 billion to £7.46 billion.

Expansion of the group's portfolio is continuing with plans to open 103 stores this year, creating 4,800 jobs, with 3,200 of them in the UK.

The company confirmed plans to open an out-of-town Woolworths, named "Big W", near Edinburgh in June. It will carry Woolworths' usual ranges, plus goods from its Superdrug and Comet subsidiaries. It will also have a garden centre, fast food from Burger King and adult clothing from Peacocks. The company is looking for other sites in the UK for further trial stores.

A final dividend of 9.25p makes a total for the year of 13p up 13 per cent. The shares fell 17p to 793p after profit-taking on the stock that this week hit an all-time high of 813.9p.

Commentary, page 31
City Diary, page 33

Business Today

Commentary:
Foot scares the children 31
Stock Market:
Investors cautious 32
Equity prices:
Unit trusts 33



Graham Searjeant
on our chance to reform EU budget

Page 33

STOCK MARKET

FTSE 100 6140.6 (-61.3)
Yield 2.53% (-0.01%)
FTSE All Share 2638.00 (-25.41)
Nikkei 16288.11 (+185.28)
New York
Dow Jones 9080.24 (-50.23)
S&P Composite 1294.41 (-11.97)

US RATE

Federal Funds 4.75% (4.75%)
Long bond 5.50% (5.47%)
Yield 5.50% (5.47%)

LONDON MARKET

3-mth Interbank 5.75% (6.75%)
Libor 6m 117.68 (117.22)

STERLING

New York
£ 1.6297 (1.6292)
London
£ 1.6296 (1.6243)
\$ 1.4893 (1.4893)
SP 2.3552 (2.3515)
Yen 192.97 (191.45)
\$ Index 102.4 (102.8)

US \$ DOLLAR

London
£ 1.021* (1.0295)
SP 1.4489* (1.4543)
Yen 118.21* (117.63)
\$ Index 107.6 (108.0)
Tokyo close Yen 118.68

WORTH WATCHING

Brent 15-day (Jun) \$12.25 (\$12.75)

COMMODITIES

London close \$294.15 (\$293.95)
* denotes midday trading prices
Exchange rates Page 30

Monks calls for a cut in number of unions

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

JOHN MONKS, General Secretary of the Trades Union Congress, yesterday launched a radical campaign to modernise the union movement, calling for a drastic reduction in the total number of unions and new membership recruitment procedures.

The TUC is concerned that gains made through the Government's Fairness at Work legislation could be undermined if inter-union turf wars erupt over union recognition cases.

However, Mr Monks also made it clear that he wants to set an ambitious goal of building a more logical and efficient union structure over the next ten years, which will accommodate the changing nature of the workplace. He said: "I want to see fewer unions in Britain, organised more logically. That is not to say there is no role for smaller specialist unions or that bigger unions can be broken up and put back together again, but there is still scope for modernisation."



Monks: logical structure

In the short term the TUC is keen to establish a more thorough procedure to deal with inter-union disputes arising from the new union recognition legislation. The Central Arbitration Committee, which is to review recognition cases, has already made it clear that it will not proceed with any recognition applications where there is any evidence of inter-union rivalry.

The TUC fears that failed recognition cases could undermine the credibility of the new system unless TUC-supported guidelines and sanctions for unions who break the rules are strengthened.

The long-term aim is to simplify union structure and make it easier for workers who change jobs to move their membership. As part of this process, Mr Monks would like to see fewer unions based on whole sectors rather than individual jobs. However, he noted that the trend to fewer unions is already in place, with the number of TUC-affiliated unions declining from about 200 to 75 over the past couple of decades. This trend is expected to be continued, with three banking unions reporting the result of their merger ballot next week. Biffa, the NatWest Staff Union and Unifi, the Barclays union, are expected to receive approval to join forces.

Commentary, page 31

Annunziata pays \$12bn for Frontier

GLOBAL CROSSING, a fledgling US phone company with barely \$1 billion in annual sales, yesterday paid \$12.5 billion (£7.7 billion) in cash and stock for Frontier, a US long-distance carrier (Andrew Butcher writes from New York).

The latest deal in the US telecoms merger revolution is the first move by Robert Annunziata, the former AT&T executive, who became chief executive of Global Crossing last month.

Global Crossing is just two years old and went public last August. Mr Annunziata said yesterday that the company was looking to buy more local phone companies. "Merging with Frontier will enable us to greatly accelerate our aggressive growth strategy."

Mr Annunziata built Teleport Communications into a \$13 billion group before it was bought by AT&T last year. Global Crossing started out building undersea fibre-optic cables for the likes of Deutsche Telekom, but has quickly expanded into phone and data services through the Internet.

New bank gives good account of itself

By CAROLINE MERRELL
BANKING CORRESPONDENT

STANDARD LIFE, the latest entrant to the British banking industry, said yesterday that it had received applications for £3.2 billion worth of mortgages since the launch of its bank at the beginning of the year.

In January alone, Standard Life Bank claimed that its net share of all new UK mortgages was 30 per cent. Jim Spowart, its managing director, commented: "We have taken the market by storm."

The new bank put its success down to its low mortgage rate — currently

6.05 per cent — which is almost a point lower than Halifax's variable rate of 6.95 per cent.

Mr Spowart said that the bank had originally expected to have £1 billion worth of mortgages by the end of the year. The market reaction had been such that those targets have been upgraded to £2.5 billion worth of mortgages within the first year.

In the first eight weeks of business the bank said that it had completed £150 million worth of mortgages. Mr Spowart said that most of the lending was remortgage business from the high street lenders, which are dominated by the floated former building socie-

ties such as Halifax, Abbey National and Woolwich.

He said that interest had reflected Standard Life Bank's innovative "Free-style" mortgage product, which offers daily interest calculation and no arrangement fees, although it had also been helped by competitive interest rates, which had dropped 0.75 points since the January launch.

If Standard Life Bank were to achieve its £2.5 billion target, this would equate to a UK market share of about 3 per cent.

The bank also said that it had taken more than £2.4 billion in savings deposits from more than 200,000 customers.

The entry of Standard Life, Europe's largest mutual life insurer, into the mortgage and deposits market prompted fears among its high street rivals already threatened by increased competition and the likelihood of thinner margins.

The launch of Standard Life in the banking market followed hard on the heels of the launch of Egg by Prudential Corporation's new banking arm. Egg recently reported that it had taken £3 billion in deposits since its October launch, although interest may have dissipated after a fall in savings rates since its initial headline-grabbing rate of 8 per cent gross.

Foot frightens the children



COMMENTARY by our City Editor

No, this was not Michael Foot of the wild hair, gesticulating arms and donkey jacket. The Michael Foot who yesterday made a statement guaranteed to frighten the children was the quiet, sensible, former Bank of England chap. This Michael Foot knows what he is talking about and if he chooses to warn that household names in the financial services business may have to be shut down because they will not be prepared to cope with the millennium bug, then it is time to take notice.

It may be that his statement was intended only to scare the financiers rather than their customers. If you are a regulator who fears that one or two of your flock may not be taking the bug seriously enough, then a public warning on this scale might be a way of making them take notice. Preparing for the introduction of the euro certainly became something of a distraction for some banks in the last few months of last year and their preparations for the dawn of 2000 may have slowed as a result. Perhaps Mr Foot fears they have not yet got back to speed.

But he is in a position to convey his thoughts quietly, if firmly, to those who are giving him cause for concern. That he made his remarks publicly yesterday, at a conference on the bug, was destined to cause fear far beyond the Square Mile.

The public is already nervous of the possible effects of the bug and will inevitably be more so

when it hears the reasonable Mr Foot warning that unnamed, but well known, institutions may be unable to cope.

People are already beginning to stock pile food. In anticipation of huge demand, supermarkets are already taking on additional warehouse space to accommodate the extra rations that they anticipate they will be able to sell in the run up to the end of the year. Banks have been fearful of the same attitudes being translated into a run on cash.

They have pondered whether it would be wise to write to customers assuring them that there is no need to fear, their money will be safe as the centuries change. Yet that sort of comfort letter can have exactly the opposite effect to that intended, alerting customers to a potential risk that they had not previously taken seriously.

Mr Foot's words cannot be dismissed. British banks have been patting themselves on the back for assimilating the new currency with barely a hitch. But sophisticated banking businesses deal in foreign currencies all the time and should have been able to cope with the advent of a new one. The problems posed by the bug are different and deeper-seated. And the growth in the financial services industry means that there are many companies now

looking after people's savings which are relatively young and unsophisticated. They may need more than dire warnings from Mr Foot to deal with the problems. Even for those banks that have their own house in order, there is a high risk that counterparty will not be ready to play properly when the new year dawns. The next edict from Mr Foot will surely be to cancel Christmas for bankers.

Kingfisher blue? No, thanks to Mulcahy

Is it a bird? Is it a plane? No, it's a retailer. Ten years after changing its name to Kingfisher, the stores group is still striving to find a neat explanation for itself. Yesterday, it opted for "the European home and family retailer", which should result in a visit from the trading standards officer, since homes and families are not available from any of the group's 2,742 outlets. Kingfisher remains a collec-

tion of largely unrelated businesses, ranging from Europe's biggest DIY company to the recently acquired Electric City, which has seven stores in Singapore and is suffering from a consumer power cut.

Together, they have enabled Sir Geoffrey Mulcahy to deliver a remarkable set of figures. To squeeze profits growth of more than 15 per cent out of retailing in these tightfisted times is an achievement that few of his rivals will equal. It even excuses him for announcing that Kingfisher's ambition is to "deliver an unbeatable shopping experience based on outstanding value, choice and service". Well, perhaps in China, where it will open in June, a visit to B&Q really will amount to an unbeatable shopping experience.

The international expansion is remarkable. Kingfisher is now a truly European operator and stretching further afield. Yet the operating businesses remain separate. Now, with Big W, there is to be an attempt to find some

synergy across the group. The experimental store, on the edge of Edinburgh, will incorporate merchandise from the various chains, ranging from Comet's electrical goods to Superdrug's specialities. It may end up recalling the bazaar heritage of the original Woolworth.

But apart from the single experimental Big W, there is but one element that links the various Kingfisher businesses. It is Sir Geoff himself. The phenomenally hands-on chief executive has led the group through its difficult times and proved that his board was right to back him in the power struggle with Alan Smith in 1995. Mr Smith's achievements as chairman of Storehouse are no match for Mulcahy.

Yet at some stage even Sir Geoff may feel the need to quit his Marylebone office. Who would succeed him is a mystery. Roger Holmes, the former finance director of B&Q, who is now running Woolworth is said to be making an impression. He hails from Sir Geoff's favourite consulting firm,

McKinsey, as did former Kingfisher finance director, Archie Norman, of Asda.

Sir Geoff and Archie still talk. Do not rule out a deal between them. That would enable Archie to move on and Sir Geoff to solve his succession problem with Asda's Allan Leighton.

Hammering home the point at Wickes

While B&Q has been venturing into far-flung places, its rival Wickes has been concentrating on the home market. Earlier this month, it reported a profit of almost £25 million for last year, a distinct home improvement on the previous year's glaring red figures.

Bill Grimsey has rebuilt the business after the extraordinary accounting scandal that threatened the collapse of the company two-and-a-half years ago. It is now strong enough to be planning to spend £48 million this year on refurbishing existing stores and adding a few new ones.

But while Mr Grimsey is looking to the future, there are still some who are looking to the past. In particular, the Serious Fraud Office, which has been investigat-

ing what went on in the company to allow reported profits to be just an illusion.

The complicated double accounting systems that were operated within the company, with the help of stacks of their suppliers, took teams of forensic accountants to dissect. As the process went on, the former chairman, Henry Sweetbaum, and one-time finance director Trevor Llewellyn, were prevailed upon to repay substantial bonuses that the inflated profit figures had generated for them.

There may be more cash to flow back into Wickes's coffers as a few other bonuses have, apparently, still to be reclaimed from non-deservers. And the SFO has not given up on the idea of nailing the culprits in this DIY case. It could be a long trial.

Bigger the better

JOHN MONKS would like to see fewer trade unions. Instead, he would like bigger, more powerful ones. The thought will not thrill those in business who fear the consequences of the imminent legislation that will enshrine the right to trade union recognition. But Mr Monks's message is as relevant to those on the other side of the business equation as to the unions. There are far too many organisations representing business interests, and collecting chunky subscriptions. The time is right for rationalisation among these as well as the unions.

Setback for Premier Farnell

BY PAUL ARMSTRONG

PREMIER FARNELL, the electronics distributor, warned its long-suffering shareholders yesterday that market conditions would not improve this year and that a significant turnaround in profit was up to three years away.

John Hirst, chief executive, made the frank assessment of Premier's plight after revealing that pre-tax profits fell 28 per cent to £100.4 million in the year to January 31.

The figures included net exceptional losses of £10 million stemming mainly from expenditure on computer systems which do not meet the company's demands.

The result was widely expected and Premier shares lost just 2p to 192p. But the stock has been more than halved in the past year.

Mr Hirst said Premier had "stabilised" its US operations towards the end of the year after a poor performance in the first half.

This was blamed on the decision in 1997 to sell products for no less than the published pri-

ces, ending negotiations with customers.

But he said some flexibility had been reintroduced and sales were recovering.

Premier's profit was also damaged by the impact of the strong pound on many of its industrial customers.

Mr Hirst said it would take until 2001 for the company to recover the £15 million a year it was investing in marketing and other measures designed to lift sales.

Premier has also allowed £25 million to integrate its systems after a period of poor technology planning and a further £20 million to upgrade logistics and service capability.

"There are few business turnarounds that have very sharp corners," Mr Hirst said. "This year we will start to see small signs of improvement but we are talking two or three years for a significant turnaround."

A final dividend of 5p was declared, making 9p for the year, compared with 12.9p previously.

M-R Group in takeover discussions

BY CHRIS AVRES

M-R GROUP, the data storage and retrieval group formerly called Microfilm Reprographics, yesterday admitted it was in takeover talks, thought to be with a large outsourcing group.

The company — which has undergone a restructuring to move away from microfilm and microfiche and concentrate instead on managing high-tech electronic databases — said talks were "at an early stage".

M-R Group, headed by Colin Haylock, has won a number of contracts from telephone companies, such as Vodafone, and Cable & Wireless, which need to maintain large databases of customer information.

Analysts yesterday speculated that the offer could have come from a US outsourcing company wanting to get into the lucrative British data storage market. Shares of M-R Group rose 20p yesterday to 138p, up from year low of 85p.

Breweries sale hard to Swallow

BY DOMINIC WALSH

THE sale of Swallow Group's Vaux Breweries arm to a management buyout team was on the verge of collapse last night after negotiations between the two sides reached an impasse.

Alchemy Partners, the MBO team's venture capital backers, and the Swallow sale committee are believed to have fallen out over several issues, notably that of beer supply agreements.

Negotiations were not helped by the sacking last month of Martin Grant, the group's chief executive, and Neal Gossage, the finance director, after they secretly put forward an alternative proposal to investors. The two men were unhappy that Frank Nicholson, the head of the MBO team, is brother to Sir Paul Nicholson, the Swallow chairman.

The deal's collapse is likely to force Swallow to close its two breweries and retain the bulk of the 350 pubs involved. Swallow shares fell 7p 274p.

Third profits warning squeezes Devro shares

BY FRASER NELSON

DEVRO shares fell a further 40p to 143p yesterday after the world's largest sausage-skin maker issued its third profits warning (Fraser Nelson writes).

The company, whose shares peaked at 545p last year, blamed a sharp decline in demand for sausages in Russia, Eastern Europe and the Far East, whose emerging markets have been blighted by economic crisis. This had caused a fall

in orders for finished sausages from Devro's US factories.

Pre-tax profits fell to £36.1 million (£58 million) for 1998 — slightly below the level indicated at its November warning. Earnings were 14.4p (23.6p) per share; the dividend is held at 9.5p. Analysts marked down full-year estimates to £33 million (£39 million).

Tempus, page 32



Encourage letters of complaint and you'll bring on to 10% more of your customers

Shocking, isn't it? But it actually makes very good business sense. The fact is we all like a good moan now and again. And customers are no exception. Unfortunately they tend to be a little reticent, so before you realise there's a problem they've walked away. The solution can be as simple as a

letter. The fact is we all like a good moan now and again. And customers are no exception. Unfortunately they tend to be a little reticent, so before you realise there's a problem they've walked away. The solution can be as simple as a

CUSTOMER
FEEDBACK



Blair's chance to reform EU budget

Jacques Santer's European Commission may have been a disaster. The timing of its demise was great. Much of the way the EU operates and what it should do are up for grabs anyway as part of a package called Agenda 2000, which aims to keep the EU manageable when it enlarges to the East, supposedly in 2002.

Alongside the affluent burghers of Brussels would be the aspiring escapees from Communism in Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Estonia and Slovenia, a rare vision that unites eurosophes and eurosophes. Together, the newcomers add up to a country more populous than France, Italy or the UK but with about a third of the income per head.

In Poland, by far the biggest of the next wave of entrants, about a fifth of families depend on farming for a living, ten times the EU average. Farm support already accounts for about 43 per cent of EU spending, even more than the structural funds used to help to lift up poorer members and regions.

The impact of bringing in the

former East Germany can be seen in the queues round euroland. Averagely affluent Ireland has been getting a net 5 per cent boost to output from the Community. So enlargement is going to cost a packet. Unless, that is, the common agricultural policy is clipped and the powers of members states are sheared, especially the little ones.

The Amsterdam Treaty started watering down members' influence in the Council of Ministers. The number of EU Commissioners and whether every member should have one are to come.

A start was made on spending

by cutting support prices under the CAP, although any net cuts depend on compensation, which has yet to be agreed. Then the German plan was hit for six by events. Instead of piping their way round Europe's capitals to sell Agenda 2000, German ministers are trying to arrange a new EU government.

Member states were already suspicious enough to limit EU spending to 1.27 per cent of output. After the latest revelations, few will volunteer more. Germany and The Netherlands, which contribute a far higher proportion of national income than anyone else, want cuts. Yet resigning Commissioners claimed that things had gone wrong because they were asked to do too much with too little.

Agenda 2000 says the EU should just be able to manage if growth is high enough. But that may not allow for the impact of the



euro and the need to help out poorer regions of euroland through a "Cohesion Fund" if things go wrong there. Deepening the union is as expensive as widening it.

One answer is for the EU to do less: to cut the number of programmes it funds. The new law should have a full-time Commissioner for Subsidiarity, searching

out things that could be done by member states if they want to. Richer countries could support their own poorer regions. Another answer is to get incentives right. Usually the EU sets subsidies, but schemes are run locally. Each nation has an incentive to dream up as many projects or citizens as it can, who might fiddle some cash.

Offering aid to poor regions in rich countries was, however, a sop to members who contributed most but got little from the CAP. Britain negotiated its rebate instead. If fringe spending programmes are to be axed, then so must be the present system for funding the EU. Charles Jenkins suggests how in *Paying for an Enlarged European Union*, a pamphlet for the Federal Trust (Kogan Page, £10).

For the tax system to be fair, wealthier nations should expect to pay more per head both absolutely

and relatively. But net contributions should be the same for equally wealthy countries. That means France and Italy, which benefit hugely from EU spending, should pay more up front to compensate. In effect, the principle behind the UK rebate should apply to all.

France and Italy are unlikely to agree to this. But Britain is for once in the driving seat. To achieve any worthwhile reform of EU funding, and therefore any large-scale reform of EU spending, the UK would have to give up its rebate.

Even on favourable assumptions, this could raise our contribution by a third. It sounds politically impossible. But this lever gives Tony Blair the chance to push through the much-wider EU reforms he professes to champion and which would also put Britain "at the heart of Europe".

Control and monitoring of EU

spending is top of the agenda and vital for enlargement. But it can only be the start. As apologists rightly point out, EU spending is tiny relative to state or even local government spending. Far bigger and less accountable are the costs that Brussels directives and regulations impose on us. UK consumers spend £2 billion a year extra on water and sewerage, for instance, to fulfil EU prescriptions. And you may have noticed the epidemic of bridge repairs that are slowing goods and people all round the country. Again it ultimately comes from Brussels.

The formation of these directives needs far greater scrutiny from the EU parliament before they are enacted. And that scrutiny is unlikely to add much unless MEPs are part of the elected domestic parliament, in our case the House of Lords perhaps. Most of all, EU rules need to be made more flexible by ensuring that all directives automatically lapse after, say, ten years.

The UK rebate could be the lever for change, but only if Mr Blair is prepared to take a political risk.

OFT wants motorists to drive a hard bargain for a new car

Adam Jones finds out why

regulators are taking another look in the showrooms

Everyone knows that disconcerting feeling of overtaking a car on a motorway, only to encounter what appears to be the very same vehicle a few miles down the road. A tingling sense of déjà vu, coupled with a creeping suspicion that things aren't quite what they seem.

Yesterday's events in the car industry prompted a similar sensation. The Office of Fair Trading — the agency that is being entrusted with more and more power as the Government becomes more and more militant on consumer issues — decided that UK car buyers are being ripped off.

In Britain, we pay up to 60 per cent more for new cars than in other European Union countries such as Spain and France. The OFT said this is because carmakers and dealers are distorting competition, and not just because of the strong pound. The OFT highlighted the fact that dealers are denied the bulk discounts that could lead to lower prices for consumers.

John Bridgeman, the Director-General of Fair Trading, yesterday referred the matter to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission for a further inquiry. The show of strength by Mr Bridgeman came after a committee of MPs claimed that the OFT was "too feeble" in its existing form to pursue suspected market abuses in the car industry. Clearly Mr Bridgeman believes that, even with the ex-



Arthur Daley epitomised dodgy dealers but pricing practices are proving a bigger threat to their reputation at present

panded powers being handed to him by the Department of Trade and Industry, he does not have enough teeth to hurt the people responsible for this situation.

Guiltily or not, carmakers and dealers face a further nine months of bureaucratic grind while the MMC conducts its investigation.

But hang on a minute, haven't we seen something like this before? In 1990 the OFT referred the car industry to the MMC over pricing issues. The MMC reported back in 1992. To the fury of consumer lobby-

ists, it pretty much absolved carmakers of abusing their exclusive relationships with dealers to keep prices artificially high. It did make several recommendations to try to foster more competition. Carmakers were to allow their franchised dealers to sell other brands, subject to a few commonsense limitations.

They were also to let dealers advertise more freely, encroaching on another franchised rival's turf if they so wished, fostering "intra-brand" competition. Dealers were also to be allowed to engage in related busi-

ness, such as car hire, second-hand car sales or general servicing, without having to fear the disapproval of their most important supplier.

These measures were included in European legislation in 1995 and came into force in 1996. So why is the matter being re-examined by the MMC just three years later?

The OFT says it referred the matter to its more muscular "big brother" for a second time simply because the previous measures did not work. Carmakers are still too much in thrall to the manufacturers. An

OFT official said yesterday: "The measures didn't change the balance of power."

Alan Pulham, the director of the National Franchise Dealers' Association, which represents those dealers whose fates are most intimately tied to the carmakers' whims, has an alternative explanation. Yes, the first MMC report led to greater freedom for dealers, he says — but on paper only.

He says franchised dealers, who have about £1 million to £2 million invested in their premises, are too scared to antagonise their supplier by diversifying into other car marques and increasing competition.

He claims that those who are bold enough to make such a suggestion are soon "persuaded" otherwise. "There is still some evidence of coercion."

The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders denies that dealers are leant on, saying the risk of being fined up to 10 per cent of turnover is too great. Volkswagen is the only big name to have been punished for dealer abuse.

However, the OFT found that the bonus systems set up by carmakers to reward dealers are often designed to stop them selling outside their designated area.

The OFT believes that the MMC might be bolder in its findings this time because of the pioneering stance it took on

the sale of electrical products. The MMC has banned the use of recommended resale prices (RRPs) — where the manufacturer dictates the high street or showroom price charged by the distributor — for TVs and videos and other white goods. The ban came into force last September. RRP's are also found in the car industry. The MMC, having established a precedent, may bite again, the thinking goes.

A tough MMC investigation will also strengthen the UK's call for the abolition of the block exemption from European competition rules that the car industry's exclusive distribution arrangements currently enjoy. The exemption is due to be reconsidered next year.

Car dealers have certainly changed since the last MMC ruling in 1992. Their anorexic profit margins have led to widespread consolidation. But the relationship is still as symbiotic as ever.

The mass manufacturers are awarding lower franchises covering larger areas. The increased size of these contracts allows them to continue to be tough with their dealers, who struggle along with pre-tax profit margins of about 1 to 2 per cent.

The trading relationship is getting even closer in some cases. Ford formed a joint venture to buy Dagenham Motors, the biggest dedicated sales channel for its vehicles, for less than £29 million this year.

One argument against a referral to the MMC now is that the UK car buyer will soon benefit from a loosening on the sale of Japanese cars in this country. Japanese imports are limited to just 11 per cent of the total car market at the moment. This constraint will be abolished at the start of next year.

There is also the risk that the car industry, which is already facing big challenges through overcapacity and faltering economic growth, is being swamped with paperwork and compliance requirements.

Since 1990, it has had to comply with an MMC inquiry, a European Commission study and the latest OFT probe. Now it faces more MMC paperwork, yet another round of European Commission submissions before any renewal of the block exemption, plus a related grilling from the Department of Trade and Industry.

The OFT complained yesterday that carmakers and dealers had been slow and uncooperative during the most recent inquiry. If the issue of overpriced cars did not arouse such strong emotions, the public might feel that the industry foot-dragging was justified.

Enterprising attempt to integrate rival software

Over the past ten years, most large corporations have spent tens of millions of pounds installing hugely complex software systems that link all their departments together. These systems are made possible by enterprise resource planning (ERP) software packages, produced by companies such as Germany's SAP and US companies such as SSA and PeopleSoft.

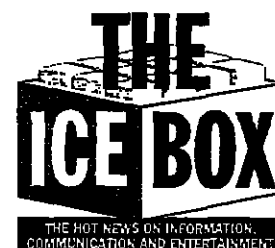
Indeed, the market for ERP software — which allows companies to automate many of their operations, and perform quick and efficient analysis of all aspects of their businesses — is estimated to be worth £40 billion. However, over the past few months, it has become clear that companies which use ERP software are facing serious challenges.

One problem is the millennium bug. Because ERP software systems can take up to a year to install, and are usually used for more than five years before being replaced, many companies are wary of buying new products before 2000.

This is because companies want to make sure that their software systems can survive the millennium bug before trying to upgrade them. However, with e-commerce catching on, companies risk being left behind by delaying upgrades.

The exploding popularity of e-commerce can lead to other problems often. ERP software packages cannot be adapted quickly enough to fit new circumstances. This means that a business has to re-engineer the way one of its departments works to get around a relatively simple problem. These issues have affected most users of ERP systems, and the companies that produce ERP software have seen their shares hit hard. However, SSA, one of the industry's smaller players believes it has come up with a way to tackle these problems.

SSA's strategy is to allow its



ERP products to work with software packages produced by rivals. The company has also invented a set of software tools that allows software produced by rivals to be "seamlessly integrated" into its own systems. It may seem like an obvious solution, but it is a big step forward for the ERP industry, which has previously prided itself on developing complex proprietary software.

As an SSA spokesman said: "Our interoperable approach will enable companies to get their software systems up and running quickly, and then to modify and extend business processes to gain competitive advantages."

SSA may have had to adopt such a strategy out of financial necessity — its research and development budget is almost crippling limited. However, if interoperability becomes standard, it would benefit customers not only of SSA, but of all ERP companies.

□ EIGHTY-FIVE per cent of company directors believe that e-mail is encouraging the circulation of "inappropriate" and often scandalous material, according to a survey by Integrals, the computer security company, out this week. The survey goes on to say that 15 per cent of directors have had to discipline employees for inappropriate use of the Internet, while 22 per cent of directors have disciplined employees for using e-mail to gossip with friends and colleagues.

□ COMPANIES from the music, software, film and television industries in Hong Kong staged a demonstration against copyright theft yesterday. The protest, which attracted international movie stars such as Jackie Chan, pictured left, involved closing cinemas, staging an "anti-piracy" march and cancelling music broadcasts. It is estimated that copyright theft costs media companies billions of pounds every year, with the Internet threatening to make the problem worse.

CHRIS AYRES

Hey, Jude

JUDITH MAYHEW, the feisty head of the Corporation of London's Policy and Resources Committee and the City's chief executive, is in trouble again. Mayhew put her name to Britain in Europe, the new pro-euro pressure group founded by Lord Marshall of Knightsbridge and others at the weekend.

Sharp intake of breath at the Corporation, which is officially neutral given the split of opinion in the City. Mayhew was criticised at last Monday's meeting of her committee and can expect further flak a week today, when the Court of Common Council meets.

She says she put her name to

side. "There's a genuine feeling that we would have liked to have been asked first," says a mole close to the committee. So you could say not? That was, I suppose, the way the question was leading."

ACCOUNTANCY AGE conducts weekly and sometimes useful straw polls of finance directors on issues of the day. Sometimes I fear I got no further than the headline of this week's "Financial directors unmoved by 'neutral' Budget," it says.

Plane cheeky

A TERRIBLE story reaches me from a good source in Nigeria that should serve as a warning to anyone thinking of doing business there. A 747, I do not know which airline, landed and started to taxi towards the terminal, only to meet a line of planks piled up across the runway.

The plane stopped, and the pilot radioed the control tower. We'll look into it, he was told. Minutes passed in the cockpit, and then someone heard muffled knocking from under the plane. Everyone stayed put.

Then a lorry was seen to emerge from under the belly of the plane and streak off. The aircraft alighted, to find that someone had unscrewed the aircraft's hold and made off with all the luggage.

Moral: keep your possessions close to you, and not in the hold. "You almost have to admire them, don't you?" says my informant.



KINGFISHER'S insistence that it is a European company meant some complex shenanigans for its results briefing yesterday. Sir Geoff Mulcahy was beamed in to the City from a meeting in Paris, where a presentation from Kingfisher and its French DIY partner, Castorama, was taking place.

Translation was provided for those of our analysts not fluent in French. The operation was deemed successful, if a little long-winded. But one of the more sceptical analysts did wonder whether, since Kingfisher never answers questions anyway, this arrangement simply made awkward questions easier to avoid.

Claude cover

WE WOULD think it odd if, ooh, Sir Peter Davis of the Pru were to sit on the boards of the Halifax, Barclays Bank and Lloyds TSB and hold sway over whether the three should be merged into the world's biggest bank. But this is pretty much the situation in France, where one man, Claude

Bébéar, will largely decide the fate of the BNP bid for Société Générale and Paribas.

Bébéar sits on the boards of SocGen and Paribas, while his right-hand man at Asa is at BNP. This morning Asa releases results in Paris, and Bébéar will be questioned by his shareholders on just what he thinks he is up to. By my analysis, whatever happens he comes out on top, with Asa's position strengthened at the expense of German rivals.

But Bébéar's manoeuvrings have not made him universally popular in the French financial community because of their impact on the privatisation of a fourth bank, Crédit Lyonnais.

It is imperative that the Finance Ministry knows exactly how many French banks there will be left in due course among which to distribute the core shareholdings of CL and prevent these slipping into foreign hands. Given the above, this is no longer possible.

MARTIN WALLER
citydiary@the-times.co.uk



"We're out of Rawlplugs — have you tried our French branch?"

The European Index-Tracking PEP

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Judith Mayhew is in trouble with the Corporation for pro-European views

No time for complacency on tax

We are now familiar with the business tax headlines of the Budget: Corporation tax at 30 per cent; a small companies rate of 20 per cent; measures targeted at small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with a 10 per cent tax rate for very small companies from April 2000, an extension of the 40 per cent first-year allowances for SMEs until July 2000 and research and development tax credits for SMEs in the 2000. Budget which would give deductions of 150 per cent of R&D spend with refunds being available to companies that are not paying tax.

No big structural changes to the direct tax system for large companies were proposed. This is good news for most corporates which have been overwhelmed by recent changes to the tax system caused by self-assessment, the new in-year payments on account regime and the abolition of ACT. However, corporates must not assume that it is all over for another year. An active participation in a number of consultative exercises is vital if business is to influence tax policy.

Last year business was disappointed that requests made for in-year payments on account to be based on prior-year profits instead of current-year profits were not heeded. Against this, there have now been notable suc-

David Cruickshank says business must attempt to influence policy

cesses in the direct tax area after consultative exercises: the proposals for a general anti-avoidance rule (GAAR) for corporate direct taxes have been shelved for the time being. Proceeding with this proposal would have resulted in uncertainty on all corporate transactions unless a comprehensive advance clearance mechanism was established and this would have added significantly to costs of doing business.

After the changes to CGT for individuals, there will now be no big changes to the way in which company capital gains are taxed. Tapering relief for companies would have been unnecessary complex and the removal of indexation relief unfair for many asset-backed companies. There will be further consultation on the rules for international groups, capital losses and gains on the disposal of subsidiaries. Companies should continue to make their views known.

The most welcome of the "new" consultative exercises are on the proposed all-employee share schemes and the proposals to reform the taxation of intellectual property. The proposed share scheme allows employees to deduct for tax and NI purposes

up to £1,500 a year for the acquisition of shares in their employer. Employers will be able to give free shares to staff up to a value of £3,000 a year and can provide further free shares on a matching basis if employees buy shares again up to £3,000 a year. After three years, there is a claw-back of the income tax relief previously given but the intention is that the growth in the value of the shares during this period should be tax-free. Employers can deduct the employees' salary forgone to purchase shares, the value of any free shares allocated and the set-up costs. No decisions have yet been made about what will happen with existing approved Revenue schemes and this will be subject to consultation. Views are required by April 30, 1999, with legislation proposed for the 2000 Finance Bill.

The need for reform to the taxation of intellectual property is highlighted by the special relief announced in the Budget for the capital cost of acquiring mobile phone licences which would not have attracted tax relief in the UK as the licence is an intangible asset. Significantly the current tax regime in the UK does not allow for tax relief on the ac-

quisition costs of trademarks, brand names, knowhow, etc. In the US relief is available over 15 years. The consultative document, which seeks to define intellectual property (principally by excluding goodwill), asks whether capital allowances or an accounts-based depreciation approach should be used for tax relief and considers whether existing special reliefs (for scientific research and films) should be continued. Views from business are required by July 31, 1999.

The Government wants the review to be broadly revenue-neutral. But what are the long-term costs to the Exchequer of an unsatisfactory reform in this area? As full tax relief is available in some other countries, companies could acquire intangibles through overseas subsidiaries and consequently income flows and associated R&D and enhancement will also (probably) take place in those countries.

The Government should also review its plans to charge stamp duty reserve tax on the issue of foreign currency bearer securities on acquisitions as this will militate against the choice of the UK as the parent company location in cross-border mergers where shares in a UK company are issued.

David Cruickshank is head of tax at Deloitte & Touche.



David Cruickshank urges participation in consultation

Customs men go crackers

JUST as food additives are supposed to drive children barking mad, it seems that it is simply the mention of any food that ensures that Customs and Excise takes leave of its senses. The latest VAT decision bears this out. In the past there have been arguments about how far you had to take a meat pie away from a pie stall before it became a takeaway item and arguments about whether Jaffa cakes were indeed cakes.

Now it is the turn of the prawn cracker. The VATmen have decided that it depends on its ingredients. If made from tapioca it escapes the tax. But if made from potato or cereal it incurs VAT. "Bizarre" is how the VAT people at Deloitte & Touche have described the decision. It is good to see that those at Customs and Excise have their curious minds focussed on the great issues of the day.

Forging ahead

EVERY management book cliché will tell you that the secrets of success are to have everyone singing from the same hymnbook and to hammer your personality on to the leadership culture. So John McCuin should be well-equipped to deal with his new role as managing partner of Shipley. This week-

end he is the terror solist in a performance of one of Puccini's great choral works and in two weeks' time will join the inner circle of the Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths.

Stamp duty

AS OUTRAGED practitioners are finding, the Inland Revenue will stop at nothing to devise devious ways to fill the Government's coffers. When it sent out the parcels of press releases that provide the technical back-up for the Budget, it put the equivalent of the postage for one first-class letter on each parcel. No one has yet calculated the amount of "excess postage due" that has been raised as a result.

Lucky for some

NICK LAND, Ernst & Young's artistic senior partner, has passed another milestone. "This is the thirteenth time I've seen the Monet exhibition," he was telling guests at the E&Y-sponsored blockbuster show at the Royal Academy last week. And he prefers it to past shows the firm has sponsored. "After 13 visits to the Cézanne I was really flagging," he said. "But this is wonderful." It also shows that, despite being mired in the firm's strategy, he can still count.

ROBERT BRUCE

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Game is up for a once-noble profession

IT HAS been an extraordinary week of rumours. Eminent sane and solid citizens have been calling up and prefacing their remarks with: "It's not April 1, but..."

Rumours of the UK board of Ernst & Young being in emergency session abounded, with a succession of limos dropping off partners at the goods lift at the back of Becket House so they could arrive without raising suspicions.

One minute the theory was that E&Y's UK arm was going to join Arthur Andersen. Then, perhaps, it was their US firm, riled by plans to move the international headquarters from New York to London, which was going to do a bunk. Or maybe it was Canada. And would the rump of the firm throw in its lot with Deloitte & Touche? Or maybe KPMG and Grant Thornton were going to get together.

It all stems from the ambitions of Arthur Andersen. With the rift with Andersen Consulting as permanent as it could be, the firm needs to increase its income and growth. And the avowed policy of its worldwide chief, Jim Wadia, is to build these through poaching chunks of other firms.

So far it has been extremely successful, but those successes have been practices and teams outside the mainstream of the accounting world. Now the firm is aiming to bring off a bigger coup. But the signs are that there is some faltering in the final furlong. Having Andersen out in the market being its usual aggressive self is destabilising the market, and a heightened rumour market is the result.

But the real lessons to be drawn are different. What we are seeing are further signs that what used to be known as the accountancy profession has turned into just another service provider. It used to be advertising agencies that provided this sort of mix-and-match fun. They endlessly transmuted from one set of odd initials to another. Creative teams came and went.

Clients were presumed to follow the stars of the business from one firm to another and so keep track of all the circuitous transformations. But really they just stopped caring. Now it is the accounting business. It is no longer a profession. What they are selling is a commodity. They have cut themselves adrift from the old idea that they were people of substance who were there to act as the voice of sanity when companies pushed creative accounting to the margins.

People used to talk of good financial reporting, backed up by strong members of the accounting pro-

fession, as being a key to lowering the cost of capital. But the signs now are that the profession has decided that they really are just simply salesmen for a line of products. That is fine.

It is how the consulting arms of the firms have grown. They have never had any doubt about it. Spot a market and pitch into it with a product line.

But the fundamentals of the firms were supposed to provide assurance. They were not supposed to have their heads turned by the ludicrous flights of fancy that the oversized egos of the business world are prone to following.

Small wonder that the reputation of the accounting world is plummeting. Take Warren Buffett, for example. In his annual report to shareholders, which was released this week, Buffett, one of the most influential investment experts in the world, argued that the state of financial reporting had plunged to a new low in America. He blamed the managements of companies.

"Many purposefully work at manipulating numbers and deceiving investors," he said. So where were the auditors, those pillars of probity, who are there for the sole reason of stamping out this sort of thing? Buffett's argument was that auditors simply gave in. And some actively came up with creative accounting scams to sell to clients.

Now that is not new. And it could be argued that this is sour grapes from Buffett after a year of disappointing performance. But financial reporting is supposed to be getting better. And it is not, particularly in America. One person I was talking to earlier this week has been trying to hire a large number of very bright Americans for a particular strand of new business. He had collated some figures on the people he has been interviewing.

Some 60 per cent of their existing remuneration packages were in options. In the US none of such figures goes through the profit-and-loss account. This overstates corporate profits and skews statistics on labour costs. It is generally considered to be a scandal. But the companies bully the hapless audit community.

And no one closes the financial reporting loophole. It is a small but important example of how the old profession of accountancy has given up the ghost. And this week's rumour market tells the same story. The Big Five firms may prefer playing musical chairs to forcing clients to face the music, but the reality is that for most of them the game is up.



ROBERT BRUCE

مكتبة النظم

BUSINESS CONTINUITY

FOCUS

Eve-Ann Prentice introduces a three-page report on the experts who help companies to cope or even thrive when disaster strikes

Working life is one disaster after another for William Want-Sibley. He spends his days — and many nights — racing around Britain visiting businesses in the throes of a crisis. He has seen it all: from flood, fire and theft to collapse buildings and terrorist bombs.

But Mr Want-Sibley is not some sort of catastrophe voyeur. He is a troubleshooter, usually brought in by one of the big insurance companies, to try to keep a stricken business trading or at least to minimise lost working time in the immediate aftermath of a disaster.

While company directors are still reeling from the shock of finding their stockroom under water or their main switchboard turned to ashes, the London businessman and his company, Response 2000, are often already taking control, organising emergency repairs and restoring a semblance of normality. They have the experience to know where to get hold of vital staff and equipment in a hurry.

Response 2000 is not short of work. In the next five years, a fifth of all UK businesses will suffer a disaster, if past figures are anything to go by. And while Mr Want-Sibley and his team may be a god-send after a crisis, it is becoming clear that companies should make plans for dealing with all manner of emergencies long before they happen.

Business continuity management — making sure that the show can go on — can mean limiting the damage of bad publicity, ensuring that there are backups of vital computer files away from business premises, or even deciding how to cope if all the staff succumb to flu.

Small and medium-sized companies may think that they could cope with the unknown, but the truth is that 80 per cent of companies which do not have a crisis plan in place go out of business within 13 months of facing an emergency.

These are the figures compiled by the Business Continuity Institute (BCI), an umbrella group for the profession which provides the only recognised qualification in the field. It has 650 professionals in 19 countries.

"Business continuity management takes an holistic view of an organisation. It's about anticipating what can go wrong and taking appropriate planned and rehearsed steps to maintain critical business processes while the business recovers," says John Sharp, the chief executive of the BCI.

"Unlike disaster planning, business continuity management examines the entire business. Using a technique called Business Impact



From floods at the Welcombe Hotel, above, to the Manchester bombing, right, William Want-Sibley, back left, and his team are ready for action

The troubleshooters

Analysis, those areas of a business which are most vulnerable are identified. The loss of customer or investor confidence will feature high on the list. In a fast-moving, competitive world, the failure of any company to meet customer expectations or needs is an opportunity for a competitor to move in," he says.

No one can predict or prevent crises such as fire and flood, but the way these emergencies are handled can have a huge impact on company profits. So can failing to foresee public relations opportunities that backfire.

"The Virgin brand is known worldwide and is based on innovative products and service," Mr Sharp says. "The fiasco with the train company running late with Labour Party members and ministers to last year's Blackpool conference has dented this image. Within days the regulator had tightened the penalties on Virgin trains."



Response 2000 had the Aquascutum shop in Manchester open 48 hours after starting bomb repairs

The institute also points to the Shell oil company and says it has lost its "You can be sure of Shell" image. "It now has a grimmer image after its perceived involvement with Nigeria's political problems," Mr Sharp says.

The company has full disaster recovery plans in place, the BCI accepts. But Mr Sharp asks: "Do they have business continuity plans that address the wider, softer issues

which risk-management fails to consider?"

The cost of implementing a business continuity plan varies enormously, depending on the size and complexity of the company. One firm might need to concentrate on diverting its mail-handling, another on finding alternative accommodation if the worst happens.

Using one of the specialised companies, which can oversee this for

your firm, can cost from £10,000 to hundreds of thousands of pounds, according to the BCI.

"A small company might just need to back up its computer files," Mr Sharp says. "Medium companies could combine the role of a business continuity manager with that of risk manager. However, the managers responsible must understand the different approach that business continuity will require."

But even the best plans can go awry, and then it is up to insurers and damage limitation experts such as Response 2000 to move in.

When the Manchester bomb devastated the city centre on June 15, 1996, Aquascutum's shop was among the most badly hit. Floors, walls and ceiling were damaged, while shards of glass had been driven into the fabric of thousands of pounds worth of clothes.

Yet Aquascutum believes that it



was the first store to open for business again — within 48 hours of repair work starting. "The bomb went off on the Saturday, but we were not allowed near the site until Wednesday afternoon," says Karen Hepburn, Aquascutum's regional manager.

"Our insurers brought in Response 2000 and we were open for business on Friday morning. They do not know the meaning of 'no'."

Bomb repair work included a new shopfront, temporary glazing, new floor slabs, suspended ceilings, decorating throughout the shop, stone repairs outside, carpet cleaning, French polishing and alarm repairs. Meanwhile, the ruined stock was taken away and replacement goods brought in.

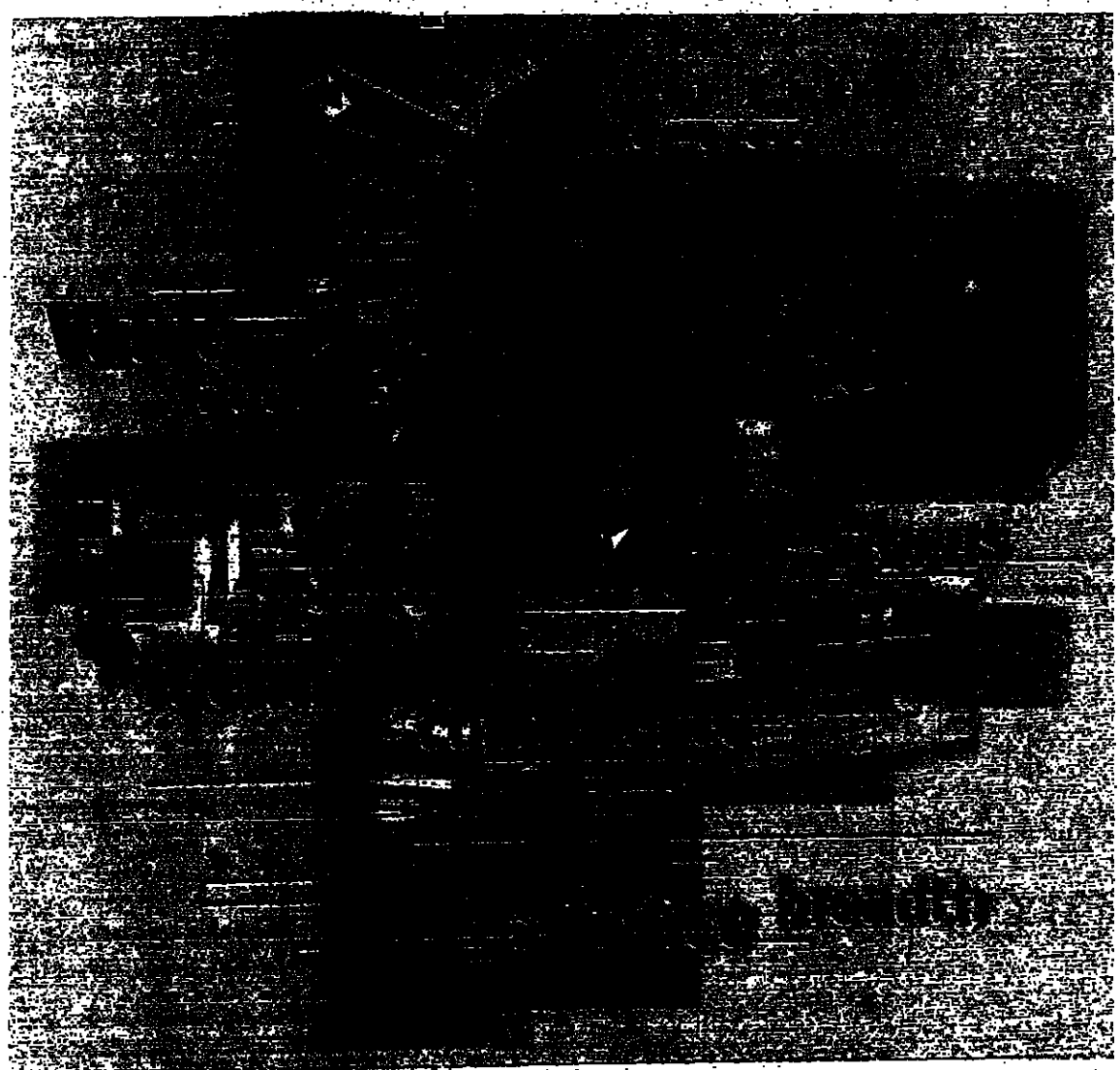
Less than a year ago, floodwater poured into the Welcombe Hotel and golf course at Stratford-upon-

Avon, just as the Easter break was about to start. By the following day, Good Friday, the main kitchen was under two feet of water, guests had been evacuated and management was considering calling in the Army.

Instead, a Response 2000 disaster team arrived and business was under way again within 24 hours. "One wing of the hotel had been badly hit and all furnishings and electrical appliances had to be removed, including sports equipment and sunbeds," Mr Want-Sibley says. "Our special resources enabled us to have 80 dehumidifiers delivered and shared between this site and another claim five miles away. Plant-hire facilities were available 24-hours a day in spite of the bank holiday."

● Business Continuity Institute: 0870 605 8783
● Response 2000: 0181-886 6566.

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Leaders in Business Continuity

Peter Power explains how companies can set up a survival plan in case of a real catastrophe

How to stand the heat in the kitchen

During a crisis our mental control panels seem to stop working: all the data go into the red zone, the data become misleading and normal measurements can mean nothing.

Experience has shown that, when suddenly faced with a catastrophe, all of us have a tendency to try to follow familiar references — things such as double-checking diary appointments or making a cup of coffee.

The more disturbing situation, the stronger the urge to take refuge in familiar procedures. Such routine or familiar tasks are invariably inappropriate in the circumstances, but they can act as a mental circuit breaker to keep us sane in a crisis.

Unable to work with the reality of the unscheduled, the unexpected, the unavoidable, the unimaginable, the unprecedented, the unnecessary or the unbelievable, many senior managers realise too late that their board-level skills have poorly equipped them to deal with sudden crises.

Many emergency plans still provide little more than a spurious comfort factor to senior management and are seldom linked to any real benefits. In general, crises follow a sudden and unexpected shift that disturbs the ordinary course of events. This leads to a state of instability and uncertainty.

The critical juncture may be of two types: either the crisis is the result of factors outside the normal development, or it is the result of the development itself. Once this development passes a certain point, it creates a state of chaos.

I have been involved with a number of tests where the chief executive or MD has been about to fall over when put under pressure. Other executives want to keep going in increasingly bizarre ways. Subordinate staff seem powerless to tell them.

MORE POWER TO YOUR ELBOW

BUSINESSES are being inundated by advice in the helter-skelter dash towards the millennium. So a government decision to produce a pioneering series of guides about management best practice may seem like offering a glass of water to a drowning man.

The publications are, however, intended as a lifebelt and will be published by the Department of Trade and Industry in a drive to help firms to compete more effectively.

The first in the series has been written by Peter Power, who discusses his role in the world of business continuity here.

Mr Power is a member of the judging panel for the annual Business Continuity Planning Awards and managing director of Visor Consultants.

Business Continuity Management — Preventing Chaos in a Crisis will be posted on the DTI's website, www.dti.gov.uk/mbp by the end of this month.

On the other hand, sales managers can sometimes have a higher competence threshold in a catastrophe and may thrive in a crisis.

Following a test or exercise, debriefings can produce statements such as: "Perhaps we only confessed our little faults to persuade people that we did not have larger ones."

The chief executive was exhausted, the MD was exhausted, all of us were exhausted. I found it comforting that on day one we were so totally unanimous.

Often, when a disaster recovery plan does exist, it has never been tested: these tend to be

paper plans only and their thickness and the "confidential" stamp do not ensure that they are relevant.

Any plan should be the result of a continuous process, of which the document marked "plan" is only the written presentation of management competence to be adhered to in the event of a likely crisis.

Plans are seldom linked to any real benefits such as possible insurance premium reductions, reducing the amount of business interruption insurance required or protecting assets.

Other things to consider include:

- Mitigation of exposure to Health & Safety Regulations;
- Improved operational resilience;
- Enhanced team spirit;
- Retention of profits;
- Continued trading ability in a crisis;
- Attractiveness to investors.

In my experience, the worst consequences result when organisations fail to prevent a crisis from getting worse and wake up only when things have deteriorated to the point of disaster.

Although there are exceptions to this, few managers and their employees understand that options exist to train people in business continuity management (BCM) to act with confidence and skill at the initial stages of an incident to stop it spreading.

Very often it is the competency level of an individual and the initial reaction team that determines how good or bad things will become, rather than some irreversible process that forces an organisation to be solely reactive rather than proactive.

Moreover, there is now strong evidence which suggests that a company's recovery of shareholder value imme-



Many executives boil over in a crisis: can you keep a cool head when the heat is on?

diately following a catastrophic loss is largely independent of insurance cover.

It depends more on high-quality risk management and business continuity systems.

That is not to say insurance cover is unnecessary: it is very important indeed, but it should be seen — similar to recovering information technology systems and databases — only as part of the solution within an effective risk management, or better still, business continuity (BC) process.

There are several variations in building up a BC process. Typically it involves all or

some of the following steps: top-level commitment; the initiation of being read in a crisis; perhaps by an employee whose heart is beating faster than normal and who is working in a very odd or even dangerous environment.

Above all else, plans must be designed to inform the reader, not protect the author.

In an age where the unthinkable has become possible and the unlikely commonplace, perhaps the question is not whether a business can afford to implement business continuity management strategies, but whether it can afford not to.

I have encouraged many organisations to ask if their

existing plans are "crisis friendly". By that I mean capable of being read in a crisis.

As the evening wore on, the calls began to come in from our clients. Three of us headed for our office at 7am the next morning but it was Sunday before we could get inside to assess the damage, which was considerable.

John Kersley, the general manager of SG-RS, says: "One of the things proved that night was that the best laid plans can be interrupted. Some of our clients had suffered a disaster but we had one of our own at the same time. We had contracted to look after them

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Shaken and stirred into action

A recovery company learnt key lessons when its own offices were shattered by a bomb blast

At a restaurant in Watlington-on-Thames, senior executives were enjoying a drink before a celebratory dinner to mark a successful year for their company when the sales and marketing director burst in.

To disbelieving ears, Mick Williams reported that a bomb had exploded in London's Docklands close to one of the company's main offices. The blast had been devastating but so, too, was the news because the company was in the disaster recovery business and the office affected contained 650 fully equipped desks supported by an independent cable system and telephone exchange for other companies to use in such an emergency.

The executives of SG-RS (Sema Group-Recovery Services) reached for their mobile phones but there was no signal. So they raced to the local office to gather what information they could and start making fresh plans.

"Like my colleagues, the executives of other companies in the bomb zone had yet to hear the news that Friday evening,

but it was clear there was chaos all around our building in Harbour Exchange," Mr Williams recalls.

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"The overriding lesson was that you need options"

"It took 18 months before everything was restored in our centre at Harbour Exchange," Mr Williams says, "but that weekend we briefed all our staff about where to go and what to do on the Sunday. By Monday, our clients were operating normally and their customers didn't know they had suffered a disaster."

Mr Kersley adds: "The overriding lessons for a disaster recovery company which might suffer a disaster itself are that you need options and must not rely, because of the communication problems, on just one or two senior executives."

TONY DAWE

Don't drown — let the bugbusters be your lifeline

In the past 12 months the question of disaster recovery has come to the forefront of every computer manager's mind as the prospect of the biggest threat of all looms large: the year 2000 and the millennium bug.

But because so much attention is concentrated on it, the Y2K problem (as it is called in computing circles) may end up causing disasters beyond its remit as other more mundane problems are ignored.

The good news is that we know, roughly, when it is going to be a problem: only roughly because not all its influence is being saved up for midnight at the end of this year. Systems that need to date things years ahead have al-

Computer loss can lead to the collapse of a firm, reports Chris Ward

ready felt its influence. One high-street store found its warehouse computer was rejecting cases of pickled onions. Their physical "best before" date was well into the next century, but the store's warehouse computer thought the "00" at the end of the date meant they were nearly 100 years old.

More mundane problems can happen at any moment. Hard disks can crash, power supplies can fail, keyboard operators can delete the wrong files.

Many information technology managers have already imposed bans on anything other than routine maintenance for fear that what is now a Y2K compliant system will fail if an untested component is installed and upsets the delicate balance of their system.

There are two potential problems with this approach: first, a component may fail through inattention and second, when January 1, 2000 arrives, systems are going to be stressed as some departments try to apply hundreds of software patches and hardware upgrades to systems which have not been touched in months. Ultimately, this becomes a classic conundrum where you will be damned if you do not change and damned if you do.

Y2K apart, the constant daily disaster waiting to happen in any computing department is data loss. Power failure, hardware failure and user stupidity are the usual causes, and all can be guarded against.

The Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) has become so refined that it can now guard



Systems back-up providers can save your data and prevent your business from going under

against loss of external power, save data and close machines down in a way which ensures that they will start up again correctly once power is restored.

They can work even in extreme cases — Liebert Europe installed a system for the direc-

tory company Scott which kept its critical computers working inside a flooded barn, the purpose-built enclosure keeping the waters at bay and the system powered up.

But if power is going to be out for more than a few minutes something more permanent needs to be set up, which is where specialist disaster recovery firms with customer-ready sites can help.

One of the largest of these is Guardian, which has huge standby computing facilities in the country. It can provide alternative workplaces, dealer

valuable or important. It then designs a system to segregate the calls in an emergency, answering the most important.

British Telecom can provide a telehousing service where systems and information can be duplicated and housed off the premises.

However, Mr McLochin says that it may not be necessary to rent or buy a separate building given the trend towards flexible working.

He says: "Many people no longer have a specific place of work. Before, all information was stored only at the place of work. Now it is managed on networks, so by using the phone at home or mobiles, staff can conduct business in a seamless way. The implications of a disaster in one location are less because of that."

Companies such as Telecom Potential work with clients to determine the types of calls normally received, the different telephone numbers they use and which are the most

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Phones to the fore

TRY working when the telephone is constantly ringing. That is bad enough. Then try working when the telephone never rings. You will probably go out of business.

The arrival of faxes, e-mail and computer networks does not alter the fact that the humble telephone and the telephone wire are the lifeline of all businesses.

Experts say that 80 per cent of processes that are critical to business depend on the telephone.

Neil McLochin, head of a business continuity working group at British Telecom, says: "It is not just about answering the telephone, it is about data, information and accessibility. You must be on-line and accessible to your customers."

Roger Giblet, a communications consultant at Telecom Potential, which specialises in

TELEPHONES

business continuity, goes further: "For any business continuity plan, the effective and immediate management of telephone communications is critical. In an emergency, not only is regular telephone traffic jeopardised but the levels of calls are likely to escalate, exacerbating the situation and fueling the crisis."

"Whether or not the building is evacuated or the switchboard is incapacitated, if callers can't get through then business may be lost. By planning to maintain vital communications, you can avoid unnecessary threats or risks."

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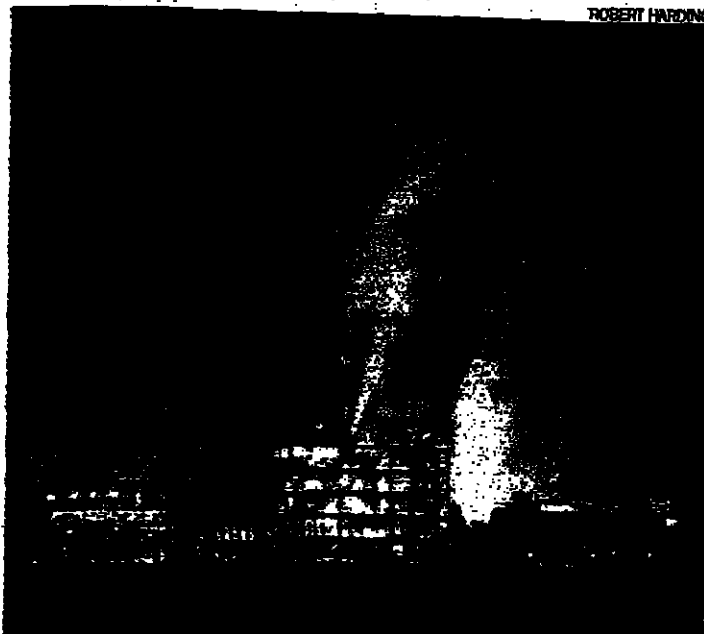
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business-recovery@gwc.co.uk

هكناض الذمحل

Keep cool, dial 999 and then switch to your new offices



Plan ahead, in case you have to move in the heat of the moment

It is the little things in life that make business continuity interesting. One such story is told by Paul Barnes, the managing director of Adam Associates, a group that combines business continuity consultancy with specialisation in information technology.

He says: "We were called to a financial institution that had moved into offices with an arborescent system had not yet been activated, so the caretaker stuck a hosepipe into the earth during his lunch break. We got a callout when the company started to lose access to its networks and power was going down sporadically. We moved people on to new equipment while we started to track down the problem. When we lifted the floor we found that all the trays carrying cables were full of water because the hosepipe had slipped out of the soil. How do you plan against that?"

Planning against that kind of incident is, however, what companies must try to do and an array of

Rodney Hobson reports on the support services who ensure that you stay in business when things go wrong

specialists is on hand to rescue firms struck by the unexpected. Adam Associates is one of many companies in business continuity that has found there are benefits in offering consultancy and services in a combined operation. Mr Barnes explains: "Business interruptions never go as you expect them to. You have to be able to react quickly, so we put in a professional services side, identifying risks and helping clients to prepare for them."

"As a consultancy there is no point in preaching a message unless you have lived and breathed it and you have been there at 3am when the building is full of smoke." Adam Associates also helps to build and design fallback sites for companies if their offices are inaccessible because of a disaster. Keeping offices on standby is

still a major service provided by the business continuity sector. Synstar has business recovery centres equipped with computer networks at Livingston, near Edinburgh, Leeds, Birmingham and London. Another about to open at Wellingborough. Any one of 800 clients, mainly from the financial sector, could decamp to one of the sites or call in a mobile unit. At least one of them does every week.

Dave Dignam, the international product marketing manager, says the mobile market, where continuity experts rolled up with an office perched on the back of a lorry, was the original method of rescuing the afflicted, but the main demand now is for fixed sites in buildings.

Some firms occupy niche positions in the business continuity sector, such as storing archives, acting as consultants or restoring

buildings after fires or flooding. One niche player is GWC, one of a number involved in printing and mailing, a business that it admits is "probably the least glamorous of all business continuity issues".

It has a dedicated facility for high-speed printing for clients such as Barclaycard. GWC may be called on to print invoices, account statements or mailshots. It can print up to 1.5 million sheets and enclose 500,000 envelopes in a day.

Neil Courtney at Belfor Imbach says that apart from information technology, where there is usually a before and after service, business continuity has tended to split among companies helping to plan to avert disaster and those that pick up the pieces afterwards. He says Belfor is one of the few companies that does both in the field of facilities management.

Among the IT specialists that offer consultancy on mitigating disasters and back-up services if things do go wrong is SC-RS, a subsidiary of the international IT services company Sema. Its customers include eight of the world's top ten financial institutions as well as local authorities and leading retailing, manufacturing, logistics and utility companies.

Guardian, with 1,000 clients including a third of Britain's 100 biggest companies, offers vaults to store critical data, fully-equipped computer sites dotted around the country, and has 11 self-contained mobile units that can be moved to the client's site within 24 hours.

LINKS

<http://www.guardiansc.co.uk>
<http://www.scmgroup.com>
<http://www.belforimbach.com>
<http://www.synstar.com>
<http://www.bt.com>
<http://www.tsp.co.uk>
e-mail: business-recovery@gwc.co.uk

The art of turning a crisis into a PR victory

How do businesses best prepare for the day their company goes off the rails, asks Tony Dawe

Experts in crisis management are fond of quoting an odd Chinese fact rather than proverb. Apparently, there is no Cantonese word for crisis but two characters are used to convey the meaning. On their own the characters mean "danger" and "opportunity".

Creating an opportunity out of a crisis is becoming an increasingly potent part of business continuity planning. Those same experts can point to examples where companies as diverse as British Midland and Nestlé have profited from calamities by reacting openly and, curiously, increasing passengers, customers and share prices when the opposite might have been expected.

"It is essential for businesses to have a plan of action detailing what people should do in the event of something going wrong, whether it's an air crash, contaminated goods or systems failure," says John Sharp, chief executive of the Business Continuity Institute. "They must have a proactive message for the marketplace."

Ministers reached Blackpool late, hot and bothered

ing director of Crisis Corp. adds: "Turning threats into opportunities needs good creative thinkers who can talk positively about the company and how it is capable of handling a crisis."

"They should not rush into saying 'we will take care of everything' because their lawyers won't like it, but if they say nothing the company will be considered uncar-

ing. "We would arm them with media packages so that they can brief the press and television on the positive aspects of the company and its trouble-free record in the past."

"If there is little information available initially, journalists will pad out their reports with background material. If you give them a proactive package, they will be on the way to creating a story you want. Otherwise they will rely on someone else's speculation."

Examples abound of poor public relations worsening a crisis for a company. Virgin, a brand with an innovative and lively image, compounded the poor perception of its train com-



Virgin rail boss Richard Branson grabs a Blackpool photo opportunity — but make sure your trains run on time

pany by delivering government ministers and party supporters late and uncosseted to last year's Blackpool conference.

"Within ten days, the regulator had tightened the penalties on Virgin Trains," says Mr Sharp.

"If the company had undertaken a full impact analysis on its business, it would have realised that the conference provided a great opportunity to impress the decision-makers but could also be an opportunity for the reverse."

Shell has also suffered from its attempt to dispose of the Brent Spar oil rig in the Atlantic.

"Greenpeace supporters in Germany blockaded all the Shell service stations and the company's market share plummeted," recalls Mr Sharp.

"The company is now sitting down belatedly to work with Greenpeace and environmental bodies to debate the most effective way of dealing with redundant platforms instead of getting into conflict."

In contrast, Mr Sharp cites last month's hydrochloric acid spillage from the Tioxide Europe plant which affected protected marshland used by

wildfowl and wading birds in the Tees estuary.

Staff had put resources into the site and as soon as it was affected they were eager to clear it up and the company accepted responsibility," he says.

"The story died away quickly. "Another example was a BP oil leak in the Mersey. Sir Bob Reid, then chairman of BP, went on television immediately to say the company would take responsibility and restore everything that had been affected. It would have had to do that anyway but the chairman's honest message created a positive reaction."

"That approach was in complete contrast to the Exxon Valdez oil disaster off the Alaskan coast. The company tried to avoid taking responsibility and didn't put up any senior executives for interview."

Michael Seymour, the director of risk management at First & 42nd, says three things must be done simultaneously when a crisis occurs: the problem must be solved, communications controlled and the rest of the business looked after.

"The first is obvious but the others are often forgotten at great cost," he says. "Unless you are careful, communications can lead the issue and the real facts and the perception of the company get muddled up with rumour and speculation."

He says that it is important to gather as much information as possible about what has happened so that you can produce a single accurate picture for the media, bearing in mind not just the general public but customers, regulators and competitors.

"It is equally important to keep staff informed and motivated because if all the decision-makers are sucked into the crisis, the rest of the business will lack direction and employees will become disconcerted and lose momentum."

Mr Seymour insists that a core management team of senior executives, including legal and technical specialists, must be ready to swing into action, know where to operate from and where to brief the media.

"They must also know where to find the relevant middle manager with expert knowledge of the particular problem, whether it is a production line manager or an information technology expert."

"Finally when the plans are in place, test and validate them to make sure they work," Mr Seymour says.

THE INTERNET IS A FUNNY THING ...

DOZENS of sites on the World Wide Web offer helpful tips or stern warnings about the year 2000 computer bug, but on Dub-2000.com the emphasis is strictly on comedy.

The site is at <http://www.dub-2000.com> and collects the dumbest things said or written about the millennium bug and awards a monthly prize for the silliest. Recently the site warned "only 301 more days to say something stupid about the year 2000".

Past winners have included novelist Tom Clancy and American Vice-President Al Gore. This month it was a telecommunications official in Russia, who said that agencies were half done fixing the problem when they had calculated how much money was needed. Y2K Humour at <http://www.doi.state.cl.us/y2k/humor.htm> (not to be confused with the Year 2000 Humour site at <http://www.y2kcc.com/etweb07.htm>) includes well-known song lyrics and poems rewritten to have a computer crashing theme.

Year 2000 Humour includes 33 tongue-in-cheek reasons not to fear the coming malfunctions including: "You enjoyed your grandparents' stories about the Great Depression and would like to experience them for yourself."

Authors of the best original jokes contest are listed at <http://www.year2000.com/y2khumor.html>. Laughs among the six winners focus on lawyers, monkeys that work on millennium bug problems and who gets into heaven after the Y2K debacle.

Cartoonist Randy Glasbergen has put up more than a dozen of his Y2K-related designs at <http://www.glasbergen.com/y2k.html>. A broader array of editorial cartoons on the millennium bug topic are posted at <http://www.cagle.com/y2k/>.

There are also a few spoofs that skip right past 2000 and look to potential disasters in later years. The Y3B site at <http://www.y3b.com> theorises that the sun has only enough fuel remaining to burn for five billion years more.

"Don't panic — we still have time," the site says.

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 tel - 01344 662929 fax - 01344 662743 www.synstar.com

Bonds up as equities struggle

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES						
122	121	Guinness	121.50	+0.10	0.1	11.6
121	120	Guinness	120.50	+0.10	0.1	11.6
120	119	Guinness	119.50	+0.10	0.1	11.6
119	118	Guinness	118.50	+0.10	0.1	11.6
118	117	Guinness	117.50	+0.10	0.1	11.6
117	116	Guinness	116.50	+0.10	0.1	11.6
116	115	Guinness	115.50	+0.10	0.1	11.6
115	114	Guinness	114.50	+0.10	0.1	11.6
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3	2	Guinness	2.50	+0.10	0.1	11.6
2	1	Guinness	1.50	+0.10	0.1	11.6
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1612	1609	ABN-AMRO	1609.00	+0.50	0.03	10.0
1609	1606	ABN-AMRO	1606.00	+0.50	0.03	10.0
1606	1603	ABN-AMRO	1603.00	+0.50	0.03	10.0
1603	1600	ABN-AMRO	1600.00	+0.50	0.03	10.0
1600	1597	ABN-AMRO	1597.00	+0.50	0.03	10.0
1597	1594	ABN-AMRO	1594.00	+0.50	0.03	10.0
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1582	1579	ABN-AMRO	1579.00	+0.50	0.03	10.0
1579	1576	ABN-AMRO	1576.00	+0.50	0.03	10.0
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1453	1450	ABN-AMRO	1450.00	+0.50	0.03	10.0
1450	1447	ABN-AMRO	1447.00	+0.50	0.03	10.0

Source: FT Information

Official Receiver can get costs in person

In re Minotaur Data Systems Ltd

Before Lord Justice Aldous and Lord Justice Sedley

[Judgment March 2]

The Official Receiver can recover his costs as a litigant in person under section 1 of the Insolvency Act 1985 (Costs and Expenses) Act 1975 when he acted without representation in disqualification proceedings against a company director.

The costs recoverable by the Official Receiver as a litigant in person were not limited to disbursements but were to be assessed in accordance with Order 62, rule 18(2) of the Rules of the Supreme Court as not more than two-thirds of what would have been allowed if he had been represented by a solicitor.

The Court of Appeal so held in a reserved judgment allowing an appeal by the Official Receiver against the decision of Mr Justice Ferris in the Chancery Division (The Times June 25, 1998) upholding the refusal of Deputy Master Thum to permit him to recover, as a litigant in person, costs incurred by him in seeking disqualification orders against three company directors, John Brunt, Paul Derek Silver and Nigel Howard Nugent.

Mr Jonathan Crow for the Official Receiver, Mr Peter J. Martin for Mr Brunt, Mr Silver and Mr Nugent did not appear and were not represented.

LORD JUSTICE ALDOUS, giving the judgment of the court, said that the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986 permitted the court to make a disqualification order against a director whose company had become insolvent and whose conduct made him unfit to be concerned in the management of a company.

Section 7 of the Act gave the Official Receiver locus standi to move for a director's disqualification and rule 10 of the Insolvent Companies

(Disqualification of Unfit Directors) Proceedings Rules (SI 1987 No 2023) provided that the Official Receiver had right of audience in such proceedings.

The Official Receiver had obtained disqualification orders in the High Court against the three directors, together with an order against each director that he pay the Official Receiver's costs of the application on an indemnity basis. When it was lodged, the bill of costs had fallen into two parts: part 1 had related to work done by the Official Receiver himself; part 2 had related to work done by the Treasury Solicitor, who had been instructed for the latter part of the proceedings and to his disbursements, which included counsel's fees.

No issue had been taken on the recoverability of the costs claimed in part 2. As to part 1, the Official Receiver had contended that as a litigant in person he was entitled to have his costs taxed according to Order 62, rule 18 of the Rules of the Supreme Court.

Both that rule and the Litigants in Person (Costs and Expenses) Act 1975 dealt with the costs of a "litigant in person" without shedding further light on the ambit of the expression.

The deputy master had concluded that the Official Receiver did not rank as a litigant in person and so could tax no costs under the 1975 Act and Order 62, rule 18. On appeal to the judge, it had been argued on the Official Receiver's behalf that the litigant in person was not, in law, the Official Receiver but the Crown.

Before the Court of Appeal, the Official Receiver had again put that proposition in the forefront of his argument. As a fallback he had, however, preserved the submission that the Official Receiver, if unrepresented in the conduct of an application to disqualify a director, was himself a litigant in person for

the purpose of taxing and recovering his costs.

Did the Official Receiver act in right of the Crown?

The origin of the surprising proposition that an Official Receiver represented the Crown seemed to lie in a departmental note on the origins of the office which contained the following passage: "Today official receivers are paid employees of the Department of Trade and Industry (ie civil servants) who act under the direction of the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (section 400 of the Insolvency Act 1986) who appoints and removes them (section 349)."

That was in law an incorrect account, but it perhaps explained why the Official Receiver had felt it necessary to develop an elaborate argument to the effect that the Official Receiver being in law the Crown, the Crown could and did act in person through the Official Receiver.

While it was entirely understandable, tactically speaking, that if the Official Receiver wished to construct that petard, Mr Brunt would want to see him hoist with it, a tactical agreement of that kind on a proposition of law could not bind the court.

The office of Official Receiver was not a prerogative office under the Crown, nor was it made by statute. It was a statutory office. But although it was generally occupied by individuals who had until their appointment been civil servants within the Department of Trade and Industry, and although they continued by law to act as and under the direction of the secretary of state, they ceased on appointment to be civil servants in the proper sense of servants of the Crown employed in the business of government within, in the present case, a department of state.

As the holder of a statutory office, each Official Receiver was em-

powered to bring proceedings, including disqualification proceedings, in his or her own name, and each was accorded by law a right of audience before the court to which he or she was attached. Did that make an Official Receiver who exercised the right a litigant in person?

There were only two possible bases for the answer: either a litigant in person was anyone who conducted proceedings in his or her own name without representation, or there was a hitherto unnoticed third category between the represented and the unrepresented litigant, namely the litigant ex officio.

The latter was not entirely fanciful. An Official Receiver litigated not in his or her personal name but as "The Official Receiver", the definite article being appropriate since in each case one such officer alone was ordinarily empowered to act, and there was an intelligible sense in which it could be said that it was the office and not the individual occupying it which possessed the right to litigate and to conduct proceedings.

The possibility of an office, as distinct from its holder, being a party to litigation derived some support from the decision of the House of Lords in *M v Home Office* [1994] 1 AC 377, 426. But it would be a further and unwarranted step to devise for procedural purposes a corresponding and novel category of official litigants.

The legal and physical fact in a case such as the present was that the Official Receiver was empowered by law to act without representation in certain civil proceedings. When he or she did so, the description "litigant in person" was appropriate.

It would follow, no doubt, that any order for costs made against the Official Receiver would be made against him or her in a personal capacity; but the department

would always, without doubt, ensure that they were indemnified out of public funds, just as any costs which they recovered went back into public funds.

The premise on which the appeal had been argued before the judge was therefore unsustainable. The Official Receiver's fallback argument succeeded.

Qualification of costs

The Official Receiver had sought to recover in part 1 his costs assessed under Order 62, rule 18(2) as two-thirds of the sum which would have been allowed if he had been represented by a solicitor.

Mr Brunt had submitted that the Official Receiver had not suffered pecuniary loss as his salary was paid whether or not he was involved in the proceedings and therefore recovery should be limited to 19.25 per hour pursuant to rule 18(3).

The Official Receiver had submitted that just because he and his support staff had their salaries paid in any event, it was not right to say that the costs of the Official Receiver in the proceedings were limited to disbursements.

The costs, like the costs of the Treasury Solicitor in *In re Eastwood (Deceased)* [1975] Ch 112, were pecuniary in nature and therefore the amount recoverable should be that provided for in rule 18(2).

The court did not believe it to be correct to say that the costs of the Official Receiver were limited to disbursements because he was salaried any more than it was right to advance that argument in relation to the Treasury Solicitor or a salaried solicitor.

The Official Receiver had incurred costs over and above disbursements. These were pecuniary in nature and amounted to pecuniary loss. It followed that rule 18(2) applied.

Solicitors: Treasury Solicitor; Neeldman Trean.

Catchpole v Buckinghamshire County Council and Another

Before Lord Justice Stuart-Smith, Lord Justice Thorpe and Lord Justice Sedley

[Judgment March 9]

In deciding what educational provision was appropriate for a child with special educational needs and whether to name a particular school in the child's statement of special educational needs, a local education authority was required to take into account the parents' expressed preference under section 9 of the Education Act 1996 for an independent school.

Paragraph 3(3) of Schedule 27 to the Act, which required a local education authority to give effect to parental preference for a named maintained, grant-maintained or grant-maintained special school in certain circumstances, did not exclude the general principle in section 9 which established no more than an obligation to have regard to a general principle of parental preference.

The Court of Appeal so held in a reserved judgment, dismissing an appeal by Michael and Mary Catchpole, against the dismissal by Mr Justice Laws on May 20, 1998, of their appeal against the decision of the Special Educational Needs Tribunal on November 3, 1997 not to amend the school named in a statutory statement maintained in respect of their dyslexic son by Buckinghamshire County Council so as to accord with their expressed preference for a named independent special needs school.

The tribunal had held that, in the case of a child with special educational needs, the obligation to take into account parental preference under section 9 was qualified by paragraph 3(3) of Schedule 27 to the Act which clearly limited the issue of parental preference to maintained, grant-maintained or grant-maintained special schools.

The tribunal concluded that a residential placement at the independent school, preferred by the parents, which their son was already attending, was not necessarily the best thing for him, and that his needs could be met at a named mainstream secondary school maintained by the local education authority. The tribunal also found that a correct interpretation of the law would have made no difference to the outcome.

The parents appealed and the local education authority cross-appealed.

Solicitors: Bishop & Sewell; John Ford, Islington.

pealed on the judge's construction of section 9.

Section 9 of the Education Act 1996 provides: "In exercising or performing all their respective powers and duties under the education Acts, the secretary of state, local education authorities and the funding authorities shall have regard to the general principle that pupils shall be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents, so far as that is compatible with the provision of efficient instruction and training and the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure."

Paragraph 3 of Schedule 27 to the Act provides: "In relation to children with special educational needs: (1) Every local education authority shall make arrangements for enabling a parent on whom a copy of a proposed statement has been served to express a preference as to the maintained, grant-maintained or grant-maintained special school at which he wishes education to be provided for his child."

(3) ... the local education authority shall specify the name of that school in the statement unless (a) the school is unsuitable to the child's age, ability or aptitude or to his special educational needs, or (b) the attendance of the child at the school would be incompatible with the provision of efficient education for the children with whom he would be educated or the efficient use of resources."

Mr Nicholas Bowen for the parents, Mr Peter Oldham for Buckinghamshire.

LORD JUSTICE SEDLEY said that section 9 was on its face relevant to all statutory functions under the Act, including functions relating to children with special educational needs under Part IV.

Mr Oldham's contention, however, was that Part IV provided a self-contained code which gave parents much narrower rights than did section 9, making section 9 redundant in special educational needs cases.

Schedule 27 was carefully designed. Paragraph 3(3) made it mandatory for the statement to name the preferred school unless it was unsuitable for the child or incompatible with the efficiency of the school or the efficient use of resources.

As Mr Justice Laws observed, that was far stronger than anything conferred by section 9, which established no more than an obligation to have regard for a general principle of parental preference, qualified likewise by considerations of efficiency and expense.

But the limitation spelt out by paragraph 3(3) was that the expressed preference for a child with special educational needs had to be for a school in the state sector, whether mainstream or special. The question was whether that by

necessary implication excluded the broader section 9 principle.

In his Lordship's view it did not. There was nothing either in Part IV, which included Schedule 27, or in section 9 to suggest that the general principle that pupils were to be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents was intended to be disregarded in relation to children with special educational needs.

It was superseded by a potentially more onerous duty in special educational needs cases where the expressed preference was for a school in the state sector; but that made it more likely, not less, that the section 9 obligation was intended to remain in play where the parental preference was for an independent school.

The global effect, when section 41 was brought into the picture, was that in special educational needs cases a duly expressed parental preference for a state sector school was binding in the absence of a disqualifying factor, while an expressed preference for an independent school was to be considered, together with the reasons for it, in the light of the principle enunciated in section 9.

Like Mr Justice Laws, his Lordship concluded that it was unreal to suppose that the tribunal could have come to a different conclusion had it directed itself that section 9 was relevant.

LORD JUSTICE THORPE, concurring, said that the local education authority had a duty to ensure that a child with special educational needs was placed at a school that was appropriate.

It was not enough for the school to be merely adequate. That involved an assessment of what the school offered matched against the child's needs.

If two schools offered facilities and standards exceeding the test of adequacy, his Lordship hoped that the better would be judged appropriate, assuming no mismatch between specific facilities and specific needs.

Parental preference had a part to play in what was appropriate and might be the decisive factor where there was parity of cost and facilities. But parental preference might be ill-informed or capricious.

In practice parental preference might mean a fair opportunity to the parents to contend by evidence and argument for one school in preference to another.

Therefore, preferences had to be reasoned to enable the parent to demonstrate that they rested on a sound foundation of accurate information and wise judgment.

Lord Justice Stuart-Smith agreed.

Solicitors: Teacher Stern & Selby; Mrs Janet Reile, Aylesbury.

Power to adjourn pending House of Lords' decision

Kingscastle Ltd v Owen-Owen

Before Lord Justice Hirst, Lord Justice Mummery and Lord Justice Buxton

[Judgment February 19]

Provided it correctly exercised its discretion and took account of prejudice to both parties, a court could in an appropriate case adjourn pending the outcome of an appeal to the House of Lords on an issue on which the Court of Appeal had already ruled.

The Court of Appeal so held dismissing an appeal by the plaintiff, Kingscastle Ltd, from a decision of Mr Recorder Paulusz in Shoreditch County Court on April 6, 1998 that the plaintiff's claim against the defendant, Gary Christopher Wayne Owen-Owen, for possession of 25a Cassland Road, Homerton, London, be adjourned on the same terms as ordered by Judge Graham, QC, on January

20, 1998, namely until the first open date after the decision of the House of Lords on an application for leave to appeal in *Fitzpatrick v Sterling Housing Association Ltd* [1998] Ch 304.

Mr Benedict Seli for the plaintiff, Mr Jan Luba for the defendant.

LORD JUSTICE HIRST said that *Fitzpatrick* was a case in which the Court of Appeal had rejected an appeal of a deceased tenant's gay partner against a possession order in circumstances similar to those of Mr Owen-Owen.

The House of Lords had since granted provisional leave to appeal and the case was due to be heard in April.

Judge Graham's decision to grant the adjournment was clearly an exercise of discretion in which he had carefully weighed up the prejudice to both sides.

The recorder had adjourned on

the same terms having considered the exercise of the discretion afresh.

By Order 13, rule 3 of the County Court Rules, the court had a complete discretion upon application or of its own motion to adjourn or advance the date of hearing of any proceedings.

The principles on which adjournment were well known: the main consideration was the balance of prejudice.

His Lordship was quite satisfied that the judge and the recorder had applied the correct principles in the exercise of their discretion. That was sufficient to determine the issue, since the court could only interfere if the exercise of the discretion was plainly wrong.

Mr Seli had submitted that the court of first instance had a duty to apply the law as it was. In his Lordship's judgment there was no warrant for laying down such a hard

and fast rule and no authority for doing so.

Mr Seli had relied on dicta of Lord Justice Denning in *In re Yates' Settlement Trusts* [1954] 1 WLR 564, 568.

The law has been stated by the Court of Appeal in *In re Downshire Settled Estates* [1953] Ch 218 and Harman J should have applied the law as there laid down, without any misgivings about what the House of Lords might hereafter say.

But in that same case, Sir Raymond Evershed, Master of the Rolls, had stated: "It may well be that if an important case is known to be subject to appeal to the House of Lords, or to appeal from a judge of first instance to the Court of Appeal, a judge may reasonably and properly think that it is in the public interest not to decide another similar case until the result of the case under appeal has become known."

Lord Justice Denning's comment had been based on evidence before the court that the settlor, who was aged 80, was in delicate health and might shortly die.

In his Lordship's judgment each case had to depend on its own facts.

It had been suggested that the recorder, having required evidence and a pleaded defence before granting the adjournment.

But while it might well be that in some cases a direction of that kind might be appropriate, no such suggestion had been made either before the judge or the recorder. They could not be criticised for refusing decisions which they had not intended to make.

Solicitors: Bishop & Sewell; John Ford, Islington.

Arthur v Attorney-General

Before Mr Justice Morison, Mr K. M. Hock and Mrs T. A. Mansland

[Judgment March 1]

An employment tribunal had no jurisdiction to decide whether a black woman of West African ethnic origin had been unlawfully discriminated against on the ground of her race by an advisory committee on justices of the peace which had failed to recommend her appointment as a lay magistrate.

The advisory committee was not a qualifying body within the meaning of section 12 of the Race Relations Act 1976.

There was a lacuna in the 1976 Act and it remained for Parliament to decide whether it would be appropriate for employment tribunals to be given jurisdiction over appointments to the lay magistracy.

The Employment Appeal Tribunal so held when dismissing an appeal by Mrs Comfort Arthur, the applicant, from a decision of an industrial tribunal sitting at London (North) in October 1997 that it had no jurisdiction to hear her complaint of racial discrimination.

Section 12 of the Race Relations Act 1976 provides: "(1) It is unlawful for an authority or body which can confer an authorisation or qualification which is needed for, or facilitates, engagement in a particular profession or trade to discriminate against a person ... (b) by refusing, or deliberately omitting to grant, his application for it."

Section 75 provided that Part II of the Act, which included section 12, applied for the purposes of a minister of the crown or government department "other than service of a person holding a statutory office".

Mr Nigel Giffin for the applicant, Mr David Barr for the Attorney-General.

MR JUSTICE MORISON, giving the judgment of the appeal tribunal, said that appointments to the lay magistracy were made by the Lord Chancellor on behalf of the Crown.

To enable him to carry out that duty he had appointed a number of local advisory panels who interviewed candidates and then made their recommendations as to their suitability for appointment.

The applicant was interviewed by the Middlesex Area Advisory Committee on Justices of the Peace but was not recommended and was not appointed. As a result of the manner of her interview she was of the opinion that the committee's failure to appoint her was tainted by direct racial discrimination.

The industrial tribunal was of the view that appointment to the office of justice of the peace was not the pursuit of a profession or trade within the meaning of section 12 of the 1976 Act since both those expressions meant the carrying on of some kind of business.

The applicant appealed and the Attorney-General cross-appealed on the ground that section 75 of the Act excluded the tribunal's jurisdiction because a justice of the peace was a holder of a statutory office and Part II had no application to her complaint.

It was not an easy case. It was, as a matter of policy, desirable that judicial appointments should be made in a manner which excluded, as far as practicable, the possibility of bias against any person based on his race, sex or disability.

It was well known that the visible minorities, women, and those with disabilities, were under-represented in the judiciary at every level.

To hold that an employment tribunal had no jurisdiction to inquire into the circumstances under which the applicant was not recommended for appointment would leave open the possibility that a stereotype of a person who would make a good magistrate would perpetuate an under-representation of sections of the community.

On the other hand, what made a person suitable for judicial appointment was difficult to define and there might be policy considerations which suggested that public scrutiny of the process in an adversarial context would or might impair its effectiveness.

Thus, although the appeal tribunal accepted the case with a mind toward construing the Act on an inclusive rather than an exclusive approach, they were inclined to accept Mr Barr's submission that any loopholes in the legislation were best left to Parliament to deal with.

It seemed to the appeal tribunal that for the reasons given in *Knigh v Attorney-General* [1979] ICR 194, the appointment of a magistrate did not fall within section 75(2) (a) or (b).

However, the fact that a magistrate was an office holder did not of itself determine the answer to the question whether the advisory committee was a qualifying body. On that issue Knigh was of no assistance.

The only issue was the extent of section 12. The guidance given by the Court of Appeal in *Tatari v Private Patients Plan Ltd* [1998] ICR 106 was of particular assistance.

Picking on some of the words of the section and seeking to fit the case into them would distort its true meaning and purpose. It

could be said that being a magistrate was a vocation or profession and that the approval of the committee was a necessary condition for appointment.

There was a distinction between a committee which was sifting job applications and a qualifying body conferring an approval.

In one sense both were engaged in a filtering process, ensuring that only the suitable might go forward.

But looking at the section overall, it was clear that performing a filter function was not enough. Section 12 required more.

It was directed to circumstances in which a conflict of jurisdiction in which A conferred on B a qualification which would entitle B to render services for C. Where A and C were the same entity, the section would appear to be inapplicable otherwise it would apply to every selection panel.

There was no policy reason to give it a more extended reason simply to fill the gap which had been identified in the present case.

The real target of the proceedings should have been the Lord Chancellor. Where there was doubt about the proper defendant when the state was involved as a defendant, the Attorney-General might be the properly identified respondent.

How judicial appointments were made raised constitutional issues. It remained for Parliament to decide whether it would be appropriate for employment tribunals to be given jurisdiction over appointments to the lay magistracy. There was much to be said for that course.

The appeal would be dismissed and leave given to appeal to the Court of Appeal.

Solicitors: Ms Catherine Evans; Treasury Solicitor.

Appeal might delay release from prison

Regina v Toney

Before Lord Justice Auld, Mr Justice Forbes and Mr Justice David Steel

[Judgment February 12]

Counsel advising on appeal against sentence in the case of relatively short sentences should be alert to the fact that in the event of the appeal not being heard until the defendant had already served much of his sentence, any reduction in sentence could delay rather than accelerate his release from prison.

The Court of Appeal, Criminal Division, so stated on the application by Damien Leonard Toney to vary the sentence of 10 months imprisonment imposed on February 3, 1998, on the hearing of his appeal against sentence of 15 months imposed on October 2, 1998 by Judge Beesley sitting with two justices at Dorchester Crown Court, for assault occasioning actual bodily harm, common assault and failure to surrender to custody.

Section 34A of the Criminal Justice Act 1991, as inserted by section 99 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, provides: "(3) After the prisoner has served the requisite period for the term of his sentence, the secretary of state may, subject to section 27A below, release him on licence."

"(4) In this section 'the requisite period' means ... (d) for a term of eight months or more, a period that is 60 days less than one-half of the term."

Section 37A, as inserted by section 100 of the 1998 Act provides: "(1) A person shall not be released under section 34A(3) above unless the licence condition which - (a) requires the released person to remain ... at a place for the time being specified ... and (b) includes requirements for securing the electronic monitoring of his whereabouts."

"(3) The curfew condition shall remain in force until the date when the released person would (but for his release) have served one-half of his sentence."

Miss Kate Lumsden, assigned by the Registrar of Criminal Appeals, for the appellant.

LORD JUSTICE AULD said that on February 3 their Lordships had allowed this appellant's appeal against sentence by reducing it from 13 to 10 months imprisonment.

The effect of that reduction, paradoxically, if it stood, was that the appellant would serve longer in prison than he would have done if his appeal had not been allowed.

That resulted from the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 bringing into effect from January 28, 1999, via the Criminal Justice Act 1991, the "home curfew" scheme.

Sections 34A(3) and 37A provided that the secretary of state might release a prisoner on licence, which had to include a condition of curfew and electronic tagging, after he had served the "requisite period" which for a sentence of eight months imprisonment or more was 60 days less than one-half of the term.

The result of that for the appellant was that his original sentence of 13 months imprisonment made

him eligible for release on licence, subject to the home curfew for a period of two months, on February 17, 1999, 60 days earlier than April 17, the date at which he would have served half his sentence.

By reducing his sentence to 10 months, the date of release, after serving half that term, had been brought forward to March 2, but it was not possible to release him on home curfew before that date, since 60 days was the period of compliance.

While that was a comparatively short extra period to remain in prison, it did not carry with it the extra curfew, it was not what their Lordships had contemplated or intended.

They took the view that in those special circumstances it was proper to substitute a term of nine months, which would enable him to be released on February 17.

The court was able to vary that sentence and was not functus officio since the order had not yet been transcribed into the record of the court of trial: see *A v Cross* [1973] QB 937.

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Law Report March 18 1999 Privy Council

Pastoral scheme reducing benefice properly made

Cheesman and Others v Church Commissioners

Before Lord Lloyd of Berwick, Lord Hobhouse of Woodborough and Sir Christopher Slade (Judgment March 17)

A pastoral scheme proposed by the Bishop of Leicester for the redistribution of parishes in part of his diocese had properly been made by the Church Commissioners under the Pastoral Measure 1968 after proceedings against the incumbent under the Incumbents (Vacation of Benefices) Measure 1977 had been discontinued, even though the scheme considerably reduced the size of his benefice.

The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council so held by a majority, Lord Lloyd dissenting, when dismissing an appeal by the appellants, the Reverend Ashley F. B. Cheesman, and 11 others against the pastoral scheme for the benefice and parish of the Gaultrey Group made by the respondents, the Church Commissioners for England.

Miss Beverley Lang for the first to eleven appellants; the twelfth appellant in person; Mr Allen Dyer for the respondents.

LORD HOBHOUSE said that the appeal raised a question of law concerning the construction and application of the Pastoral Measure 1968.

The feature of the scheme which had given rise to the appeal was its sub-division of the single parish known as the "Gaultrey Group" into three parts, two of which were to

be transferred to adjoining benefices and only one of which was to remain in the Gaultrey benefice of which Mr Cheesman was the incumbent.

Such a redistribution of parishes could only be made using the powers granted by the 1963 Measure. The scheme did not exceed those powers.

Therefore, provided that the scheme was in the words of the title of the Measure, a scheme "designed to make better provision for the cure of souls" and the statutory procedures had been followed, the scheme was one which the bishop and the commissioners were entitled to make. The consent of the incumbents was not a prerequisite.

No question of the bona fides of the pastoral committee of the diocese, the bishop or the commissioners arose.

They believed that the scheme did make better provision for the cure of souls in the diocese and that it was within the powers open to them under the Measure.

The appellants' attack on the scheme was based on the submission that the bishop and commissioners, in so far as they sought to reduce the size of the Gaultrey Group benefice, were seeking to exercise powers which could only be exercised under the Incumbents (Vacation of Benefices) Measure 1977, which made provision for the vacation of the benefice, where there had been a serious breakdown of the pastoral relationship between the incumbent and his parishioners.

The correct approach of the

Board to the disposal of appeals from decisions of the Church Commissioners in relation to pastoral schemes had been restated in *Hargreaves v Church Commissioners* ([1983] 2 AC 457, 460).

It was a genuine appeal process but the Board had to have in mind that the scheme had the support of responsible bodies within the Church of England which in the present case had considered and weighed the very objections being urged in support of the appeal.

If, however, it were the correct construction of the 1963 Measure that the bishop and the commissioners were debarred from proposing or making any scheme under that Measure in any situation where it was possible to invoke the provisions of the 1977 Measure, under the 1977 Measure, in such a situation a scheme under the 1963 Measure could not be upheld.

The appellants' submission could not be sustained.

First, as a matter of the construction of the 1963 Measure, it was a consolidating re-enactment with some revisions of the pre-existing legislation, in particular the Pastoral Measure 1968.

It could not and should not be construed by reference to the powers introduced by the 1977 Measure, which was based on considerations of incompetence or inadequacy on the part of the incumbent, as a serious breakdown of pastoral relations between the incumbent and the laity in a benefice.

The inquiry required was direct-

ed not only to whether there had in fact been such a breakdown but to whether it was attributable to deficiencies on the part of the incumbent.

A declaration of the vacation of the benefice, that is, the total deprivation of the incumbent of his freehold, could only be justified if both these criteria were satisfied.

That structure made the implementation of the 1977 procedures cumbersome and uncertain in outcome. The powers under the 1977 and 1963 Measures were different: the criteria were different.

The former did not qualify the latter.

Any scheme proposed or made under the 1963 Measure had to be justified under the terms of that Measure. If it was justified, it should be upheld; if it was not, it could not be upheld.

The appellants' submission was also open to objection on another ground. Mr Cheesman had contested the proceedings brought against him under the 1977 Measure after the quashing of his conviction for an offence of indecency; see *Cheesman v DPP* ([1992] QB 83).

It could not be right as a matter of public policy that a person who had been acquitted of such a charge should be subjected to proceedings which could result in his being debarred from proposing or making any scheme under the 1963 Measure if he was genuinely believed to be justified under that Measure; nor could it preclude the commissioners from making the scheme if they

were satisfied under the 1963 Measure that it should, on its merits, be made.

The appellants had also submitted that any interpersonal factor should be wholly excluded from the assessment of the merits of any proposed scheme under the 1963 Measure, and if the bishop or the commissioners had taken into account the personal characteristics of Mr Cheesman, they had exceeded their powers because such considerations fell exclusively within the 1977 Measure.

If the sole purpose of and the sole change made by a scheme was the vacation of a benefice because of objections to the incumbent the scheme could not be upheld. A broader perspective was required by the 1963 Measure both in relation to the problems it addressed and the changes it made.

The scheme under appeal did both these things. The legal argument, if it was to assist the appellants, had to be made good at the level of saying that any scheme under the 1963 Measure had to be justified in terms which were wholly neutral as to the identity of any given incumbent; the scheme's justification had to exclude any reference to or consideration of who were the incumbents of the benefices affected.

The difficulties about that submission were that it sought to qualify the 1963 Measure and its 1968 predecessor in a way which was not supported by the language of those Measures.

The criterion to be applied was what would make the best provi-

sion for the cure of souls in the diocese under the 1977 Measure.

It was a confusion to say that there was a different power given by the 1977 Measure exercisable on different criteria. For the exercise of the powers granted by the 1963 Measure the criterion was the more general one and did not include the exclusion contended for.

Another argument sought to resist the power of the bishop to concern himself with the cure of souls within a parish against the wishes of the incumbent. But it was the bishop who had the cure of souls throughout the diocese and the sole and exclusive cure of souls that the incumbent had within the parish was under the bishop.

Their Lordships therefore rejected the legal arguments of the appellants. However, it was still necessary to examine the scheme and the reasons given by the commissioners for making it to see whether it was on its merits justified under the 1963 Measure.

The effect of the scheme was not equivalent to vacating Mr Cheesman's benefice. He would be left with a benefice, although seriously reduced in popularity.

His Lordship considered whether the scheme should be upheld on its merits and concluded that the scheme was one which could only be made under the 1963 Measure.

The rearrangement of parishes could only be achieved under that Measure.

The causes of the pastoral problems addressed were ones which fell exclusively within the 1963 Measure and would simply have

served to defeat any continued proceedings under the 1977 Measure.

The fundamental problem was the earlier combination of incompatible parishes and the disputes between parishioners and the irreconcilable divisions to which that combination had given rise.

The attack on the validity of the scheme failed and the appeal should be dismissed.

In conclusion, however, their Lordships wished again to make clear that in their opinion the 1963 Measure could not properly be invoked as a device where the real purpose was to deprive an incumbent of his benefice or to punish him or where it was solely intended to remedy a breakdown of the pastoral relationship between the incumbent and his parishioners by means covered by the 1977 Measure, that is, the vacation of his benefice.

The present scheme was not such a scheme. It properly fell within the scope of the 1963 Measure and was properly made under it.

Their Lordships' decision should not be understood as sanctioning any disregard of the statutory safeguards to which the incumbent was entitled under the 1977 Measure where his benefice was to be vacated.

LORD LLOYD, dissenting, said that the 1963 Measure was designed to deal with the structure of parishes and benefices within a diocese and their relationship to each other.

Nowhere in the Measure, or in the Code of Practice, was it suggested

that what the commissioners called "interpersonal reasons", that is, a breakdown of the pastoral relationship between an incumbent and his parishioners, were relevant in formulating a pastoral scheme, yet they were the reasons on which the commissioners relied.

If cases of pastoral breakdown could be cured by a scheme under the 1963 Measure there would have been no need for the 1977 Measure.

It could always have been said that the "better provision for the cure of souls" within the parish required the incumbent to be separated from those of his parishioners who opposed him.

The 1963 Measure was never intended to be used for such a purpose. It would provide a most unfortunate precedent.

The scheme could not be justified on the historical, geographical or sociological grounds to which the commissioners referred in their statement of reasons.

The only reason could be the pastoral breakdown between Mr Cheesman and his parishioners, for which the statutory remedy was an inquiry under the 1977 Measure.

It was not a proper use of the 1963 Measure to divide the parish in two so as to remove from his care those of his parishioners who were most dissatisfied with his ministry.

Solicitors: Ellis-Fermor & Neugebauer, Nottingham; Mr Nigel Johnson, Westminster.

Protecting legal negotiations Intermediary's default no excuse

Unilever plc v Procter and Gamble Company

Before Mr Justice Laddie (Judgment February 24)

Statements by either party to a dispute, touching on the strength or weakness of either side's case, and any valuation of either party's rights, went to the heart of any attempt in compromise litigation, which parties must be free to do without fear of their words coming back to haunt them in court proceedings.

Mr Justice Laddie so held in the Chancery Division, in striking out, as an abuse of process, the writ and statement of claim in an action brought by the plaintiff, Unilever plc, against the defendant, Procter and Gamble Company, seeking a declaration that the sale or manufacture of Persil Performance Tablets would not constitute an infringement of any of the claims of the defendant's European Patent (UK) No 0343069.

Mr Geoffrey Hobbs, QC, and Mr Daniel Alexander, for the plaintiff; Mr Simon Thorley, QC, and Mr Colin Rouse for the defendant.

MR JUSTICE LADDIE said that the plaintiff had contended that at a meeting on May 20, 1998, in the context of ongoing and high level settlement discussions on a without prejudice basis, the defendant had made a claim of right and threatened the plaintiff with penalties for infringement of the patent in suit.

It was common ground that the plaintiff's motive for issuing the current proceedings was an attempt to give it locus to intervene in other proceedings before the European Patent Office.

The cornerstone of Mr Hobbs' contention, that only statements which were made in confidence, were protected, was *Muller v Linsley and Mortimer* (The Times December 8, 1984) where Lord Justice Hoffmann, citing Lord Griffiths in *Rush and Tompkins v Greater London Council* ([1989] AC 1200, 1300): "the underlying purpose of the [without prejudice] rule... is to protect a litigant from being embarrassed by any admission made purely in an attempt to reach a settlement" had said:

"The public policy basis of [that] rule is to prevent anything said in without prejudice negotiations being relied on as an admission."

It appeared to his Lordship that Mr Hobbs had succumbed to the tendency to treat the language of eminent judges as an admission.

It would be impossible to divide up discussions in that way, and if only the former were referred to in later litigation, the resulting picture would be unbalanced. The con-

cept of partial disclosure of privileged documents was as implausible as the curate's egg.

As Lord Justice Oliver had said in *Attorney v Head*, the starting point in deciding the scope of the without prejudice rule was the public policy behind it, the desire to encourage settlements, an early step in any negotiation would be for each party to lay its cards on the table.

The rights holder would describe his rights and say why he thought them breached; absent protection by the rule, that would be the triggering event for the start of proceedings by his opponent. Nothing could be more calculated to discourage a rights holder from seeking a compromise.

However, even if *Muller* had the restrictive effect advanced by Mr Hobbs, his Lordship would still hold the defendant's statements protected from use by the plaintiff.

Past encouragement of settlements had been of a hands-off variety, but the current climate was very different. Although the new Civil Procedure Rules were not yet in force, they represented the current policy aimed at making litigation a last resort, for example, by having regard, when awarding costs, to the conduct of the parties before proceedings began as well as during them: see rules 44.3(4)(a), (5)(a) and 44.3(3) [coming into force on April 26, 1999].

Lifting the veil Apart from one or both parties to without prejudice discussions electing to waive privilege, the veil could be lifted by the court:

(a) If a claim to it was not bona

fide; as pointed out by Lord Justice Hoffmann in *Forster v Friedland* (unreported, November 10, 1992, CA Transcript 1052);

The rule applies only to those communications which are genuinely aimed at a settlement to avoid litigation and "the value of the rule is that it would be seriously impaired if its protection could be removed [for] anything less than unambiguous impropriety";

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As Lord Griffiths said in *Rush and Tompkins* (at p1300D): "The court will not permit the phrase [without prejudice] to be used to exclude an act of bankruptcy; see *In re Daintrey, Ex parte Holt* ([1893] 2 QB 116), nor to suppress a claim if an officer is not accepted; see *Kirk v Sharp* ([1882] 48 LT 64)."

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BOOKS

The price of remaining loyal unto death

Peter Taylor, who has reported on Northern Ireland for the BBC for 25 years, is fascinated by killers. This is his second riveting official history of a group who fill the right-minded with horror and dread. Like its predecessor, which investigated the Provisional IRA, this is based on a BBC television series which relied heavily on interviews with paramilitaries past and present. But though *Provos* was no less absorbing, *Loyalists* is far more valuable. Innumerable people have written with sympathy of the IRA: few have made the effort to understand the viewpoint of their loyalist counterparts, who are poor at projecting the falsely romantic image in which republicans specialise. Furthermore, because of the values of the Ulster Protestant culture from which they spring, loyalists tend to be more honest than republicans, so for the most part, Taylor's interviews elicit truth rather than propaganda.

RUTH DUDLEY EDWARDS
LOYALISTS
By Peter Taylor
Bloomsbury, £16.99
ISBN 0 7475 4388 7



Take, for instance, Billy Hutchinson, one of two Assembly members of the Progressive Unionist Party (PUP), frontmen for the Ulster Volunteer Force. Asked if he regretted his part in the murder of two half-brothers, shot dead for being Catholics, he responded: "No. I don't have

any regrets. I believe that I was part of the war and that war had to be fought." It is a repellent statement, but a straightforward one.

Loyalist paramilitaries see themselves as patriots who risked their lives and their freedom to defend their community and way of life against IRA terrorism. Their enemies had classified as "legitimate targets" anyone who worked in any capacity for the State, which included more than half the Protestant population of Northern Ireland and a substantial number of Catholics. Loyalists had no such luxury. Ideally, they would have liked to murder republicans, but random Catholics were easier prey.

Operating a tit-for-tat policy, which David Ervine of the PUP has described as "returning the serve", loyalists responded to republican outrages often with sickening brutality. Even the Shankill Butchers, who tortured innocent Catholics to death, claimed in self-justification that it was their job to terrify the Catholic community into forcing the IRA to stop the war. Loyalist paramilitaries believe they played a noble part in defeating violent republicanism and in pubs and clubs in Protestant working-class ghettos they have thousands of fans who hail them as heroes.

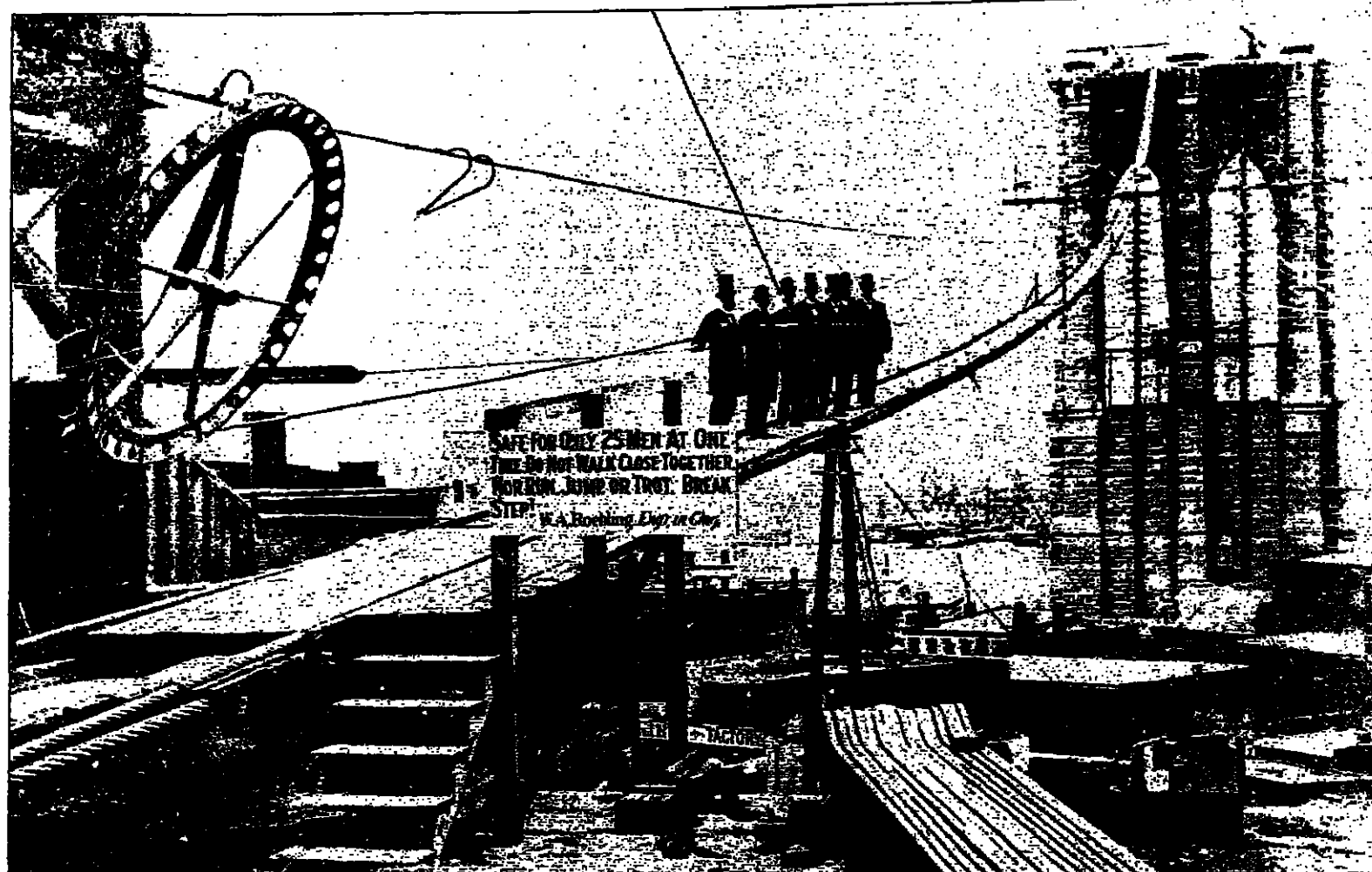
There is more reason to believe that their main achievement was to increase Catholic support for the IRA and help republicans win the propaganda war. Still, their leaders have learnt much from their enemies. Like them, they talk of peace while they cling to their weapons, terrorise their communities and operate criminal rackets.

Yet many loyalist murderers started out as idealists. Billy Giles, a decent young man who murdered a Catholic friend in revenge for the shooting of a young woman, served a life sentence and later hanged himself. In his suicide note he wrote: "Please don't let any kid suffer the history I have. I didn't deserve it and they certainly don't." With sympathy and skill, Peter Taylor shows us yet again how Northern Ireland turned ordinary people into killers.

Ruth Dudley Edwards's *Faithful Tribe: The Loyal Institutions will be published by HarperCollins in June.*



Culture wars: Orangeman on the Garvaghy Road



City in progress: John Roebling's monumental Brooklyn Bridge was completed in 1883. New York's five boroughs were finally consolidated in 1898

Gotham by its birth may frighten potential readers away or turn it into a coffee table adornment. Either occurrence would be deplorable. The book, at 1,416 pages, is a magnificent, engrossing and informative read. It is meant to be read slowly, if the reader is to absorb the enormous store of information in this scholarly yet vibrant book.

Gotham tells the story of New York City, beginning with the acquisition of Manhattan Island by the Dutch from the Lenape Indians in 1626. The city "founded as a trading post" was destined to "become a city of deal-makers, a city of commerce, a City of Capital," say the authors, Edwin G. Burrows, Professor of History at Brooklyn College and Mike Wallace, Professor of History at John Jay College of Criminal Justice.

The name Gotham, often used to describe New York City, always conjured up for me the picture of a giant, magnificent, yet dark and foreboding city. I learnt that image was foreign to the facts. Gotham was the name given to Manhattan by Washington Irving, who, describing New York in a collection of essays, referred to it as the "antient city of Gotham" which means "Goats' Town" in Anglo-Saxon. There is today a village in Nottinghamshire by that name. Gotham was known as "a place of fable, its inhabitants proverbial for their folly". That description may fit us today, but we are what we are and proud of it.

Having been born in the Bronx, I am one of the less than 50 per cent of New Yorkers living in the city who was born there. Since first running for elective office back in 1962, I have said that being a New Yorker is a state of mind. If, after living there for six months you find that you walk faster,

talk faster and think faster, you are a New Yorker.

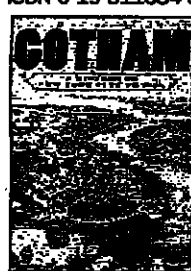
Gotham traces the city's history from its beginning to the consolidation of the five separate jurisdictions — Manhattan, Staten Island, Brooklyn, Queens and the Bronx — that were joined to form New York City in 1898. During a ceremony that I attended as mayor opening the first telepoint on Staten Island back in 1985, I declared that island to be the centre of the universe. People the world over have referred to New York as the Imperial City, the centre of world finance, culture and communications. It is *qui generis* and is today what Rome was under Augustus Caesar. All roads and air routes lead to New York City.

What will shock some readers is that during the American Revolutionary War, New York City was a hotbed of Toryism. In 1785 the city's population was roughly 24,000. It is now seven and a half million. More than half the population fled as the battle for New York City was shaping up during the years 1774 to 1776, when it was captured by British General Howe. The Tories returned with a force of 50,000 and "gathered behind British lines in and around New York City by 1782". The city, because of

Take a bite of the Apple

New York's former mayor Edward I. Koch revels in a monumental history of his native city

GOTHAM
A History of New York City to 1898
By Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace
OUP, £30
ISBN 0 19 511634 8



its support for the English monarchy, was called the "Gibbets of North America".

How surprising it is to learn that before Lincoln's executive order emancipating the slaves, it was British General Clinton in 1779 who issued a proclamation promising "every Negro who shall desert the Rebel Standard full security to follow within these lines any Occupation which he shall think Proper". They came and formed the Royal African Regiment and the Black Brigade in support of the English. When we won the war and Cornwallis

surrendered to George Washington, 40,000 Tories went into exile, overwhelmingly to Canada, as did 4,000 freed slaves. George Washington commanded that those Negroes remaining in New York City be returned to their former owners and slavery.

Beginning in 1795, New York became a major mercantile centre. At the turn of the century, it could claim that it had more banks than any other city in America. In those days, we were the capital of the United States as well as the capital of the State of New York. In 1789, the state moved its capital to Albany and in 1790 the federal capital was moved to Philadelphia.

New York City's new City Hall, started in 1803 and finished in 1812, was at the northern edge of the city — then at Chambers Street. Since the city was not expected to grow further, the front of the building was built of marble and to save money the rear, which no one was expected to observe, was surfaced with brick. I spent 12 years working in that architectural masterpiece as mayor of this gem of a city and personally appreciated its splendid interior and history. It cost \$500,000 when built, twice the original estimate — a bargain then and now.

Another great story in *Gotham* is how Manhattan came to be the centre of the current city with its five boroughs. It is told in broad strokes but with sufficient detail to make it an engrossing read. Many residents, particularly in Brooklyn which was then a city on its own, did not want to be drawn into Manhattan's corrupt politics: there were several charter consolidations approved by voters and disapproved by the state legislature at the request of Brooklyn. But reason prevailed: Brooklyn couldn't expand in population because it had no additional water supplies; Manhattan had enough water "to support four million people, or a million more than the combined population of both Brooklyn and New York".

New York City is still the beacon light for all those seeking a better life who believe they can't achieve it at home — whether that home is in the United States or elsewhere. Not everyone who comes here makes it, but if they do, they know, as the song goes, they can make it anywhere.

Mike Wallace is currently working on a second volume, which I hope will take us from 1897, when consolidation was signed into law, to the current era. I am also hopeful that I'll be around to read Wallace's assessments of my mayoralty. What's extraordinary is the fascination that the rest of the world has for New York City and its mayors, wars and all.

Edward I. Koch was New York's Mayor from 1977 to 1989.

THE FASHIONABLE
By Charles L. Black Jr
Yale University Press, £10.95
ISBN 0 300 07954 0

How the mighty fall

IMPEACHMENT
By Charles L. Black Jr
Yale University Press, £10.95
ISBN 0 300 07954 0

THE FASHIONABLE language of impeachment has led one Tory MP foolishly to describe Jack Straw's recent weekend off as a high crime and misdemeanour. This book, published 25 years ago to coincide with Nixon's fall, discusses the process and the law of presidential impeachment. As a plain analysis of complex issues too often overlaid with factional politics, it is succinct and raises fascinating questions of legal interpretation of the relevant constitutional provisions which, strictly applied, could have led to the impeachment of Kennedy for the Bay of Pigs.

IN MY END IS MY BEGINNING
By James Mackay
Mainstream, £20
ISBN 1 84018 058 7

MONARCHS are more regularly executed than impeached. This derivative life of Mary Queen of Scots is regularly confusing and contradictory as to the motives of the conflicting personalities and policies of European princes and the self-serving Scottish nobility, brutally intent on their own positions. Mary's progress to the block is traced in the context of complex Anglo-Franco-Scottish relations and the religious zeal-

ty of the Reformation. Benignly exculpatory of Mary, Mackay presents her as betrayed by princes, prelates, politicians and the implacable Earl of Moray, her own brother.

FEET OF CLAY
By Roddy Wright
HarperCollins, £12.99
ISBN 0 00 274016 8

RODDY WRIGHT, the former Bishop of Argyll and the Isles who resigned in 1996, plays things *planissimo*, in contrast to the press who, when they discovered that he had run off with a divorced woman, and the existence of his teenage son, raised a *fortissimo* hue and cry in pursuit. It's a discreet, dutiful book of the mildest autobiographical interest. Wright maintains his faith, doesn't want to change the Church, accepts the law of celibacy in the priesthood, so has nothing to feel but guilt and nothing to say but sorry. He has no bones to pick except with the ravaging media. So what's new? Nothing.

IAIN FINLAYSON

War wounds reopened by television's gaze

Journalism is so often dismissed as fiction that it is a small wonder to find its employees increasingly attempting the real thing. With its sudden agendas, inflated personalities and imperative to delete ambiguity in favour of narrative, the television documentary in particular would seem an ideal subject for a novel.

As its title implies, *A Foreign Country* is about the past and its effects on the present. Its heroine, Daphne, is an eccentric, curmudgeonly old lady who lives in the family's decaying beach house on the English coast. Disappointed by her husband, who never fulfilled the promise of early brilliance, she has, like many women of her generation, focused her ambition on her younger son, Oliver.

A golden boy from birth, Oliver is now a television documentary maker, currently making a story out of civil unrest in a breakaway republic of the former Soviet Union. Divorced, he has a pretty but silly girlfriend, Rachel, who wants to make a documentary of her own about Britain's deportation of Italians during the Second World War. Most of these supposed "enemy aliens", who were arbitrarily selected, died when the boat that was transporting them was sunk. One of those responsible for the selection was Daphne.

AMANDA CRAIG
A FOREIGN COUNTRY
By Francine Stock
Chatto & Windus, £14.99
ISBN 0 7011 6856 0



Stock writes with the cool intelligence tinged with the sympathy and humour that made her, deservedly, an admired television journalist — she is now a presenter of Radio 4's *Front Row*. In her comprehension of how members of a middle class family can fail to communicate, her tone is close to that of Penelope Lively. She is good at conveying the way women, both young and old, negotiate with the world. Rachel's assessment of her career prospects once she is over 30 spring from the same shabby pragmatism as that of Oliver's translator, Nikki, who allows him to have sex with her in exchange for a bath in his luxury hotel.

Daphne's merciful oblivion as to quite how much her adored son dislikes her is what gives *A Foreign Country* its sharpest edge. Marginalised from her own life by her wish to render disorder orderly, Daphne extends a hospitality as automatic as it is without savour. Her editing of the human and ambiguous is linked to this double narrative to that of her son Oliver, manipulated abroad by a different political agenda. "Television is bound to simplify," Rachel observes. "What gets left out of the story is the place 'where people dare and bleed and weep'."

There are many in television who should envy this elegant, well-written and exemplary debut, not least for its light touch regarding the medium's tawdry aspects. Yet it reads like something which has been willed, as an achievement, rather than grown irresistibly and organically out of some inner apprehension of the world it describes. Daphne's fear of feeling (and failing) seems to be shared by the author.

Be bolder next time, please. It is not by intelligence but by passion that the true novelist emerges: without passion and its terrifying risk of making the author look a fool, fiction, like television, disappears into the ether.

The Times Literary Supplement

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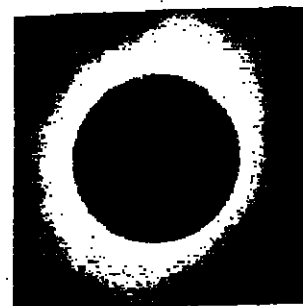
Full Marx
for night of
madcap fun

PAGE 45

THE TIMES ARTS

HERITAGE

Comwall
prepares for
celtsie fever



NEW MOVIES: Suburban paranoia has rarely been more thrilling than in *Arlington Road*, says James Christopher

A stranger's a fiend you do not know

The film of the week, *Arlington Road*, is a nerve-shredder that sent me blinking and twitching into the streets of Soho. It's a thriller piece of paranoia: a political Hitchcock whose opening shots create a mood of deep unease.

Driving home from work, history professor Michael Faraday (Jeff Bridges) comes across his neighbour's son lurching down an empty, suburban street with half his hand blown off by a home-made bomb. Thanks to Faraday's mercy dash to hospital the boy lives and Faraday earns the grateful friendship of the boy's father, Oliver Lang (Tim Robbins). Faraday knows a thing or two about bombs. The suspicious death of his wife, an FBI agent, has blown a gaping hole in his life, and his lectures are dominated by the gory aftermath of random acts of terrorism: the bombing of Federal buildings, trade centres and skyscrapers, icons of the American dream. For Faraday, these aren't random incidents at all, but a meticulous campaign by extremists with vested interests in fear.

Crucially, he can never put his finger on what those interests might be. But he can work his conspiracy theories out in his home in Arlington Road. The small lies and evasions of Lang, his urbane new friend and perfect neighbour, provide enough under to set Faraday's suspicions blazing. A structural engineer, Lang gets mail from a college he never went to. The blueprints of a shopping mall Lang claims to be building look like an office block. His past is full of shifty inconsistencies, and his identity is suspect.

The deeper Faraday digs, the wilder and uglier his conclusions. A beautiful friendship turns into an icy standoff. Is Faraday the Neighbour-

Arlington Road

Warner Village
West End 15, 117 mins
Nerve-shredding thriller
with a magnificent
performance from Jeff
Bridges

Waking Ned

UCI Whiteleys
PG, 91 mins
Lottery Galore! for an
Irish village

Seul Contre Tous

(I Stand Alone)

Curzon Soho 18, 93 mins

Stomach-churning
voyage through a
butcher's life

Southpaw

Metro 15, 77 mins

Gripping documentary
about traveller boxing
champ

A Night at the Roxbury

Plaza 15, 82 mins

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cheat. Entire scenes of Mark Pellington's film turn out to be huge, whopping red herrings. A film that works by stealth suddenly turns into a hurtling melodrama. A rumbling soundtrack and expensive set-pieces act on the senses like G-force. There are death-defying car chases, frantic phone calls to old salts in the FBI and dashes to rescue sons from sinister boy scout camps. Sophisticated grumblers will say the film sells out. But you can't help but gasp at the daring of Ehren Kruger's plot — a truly awesome, evil thing that rips your expectations to shreds.

And so to *Waking Ned*, a tipsy Irish comedy with a tumbler of *Whisky Galore!* in its belly. It's a harmless piece of codswallop, notable mostly for its charming tour of the tics and mores of life in the fictional hamlet of Tully More, population 52 and dwindling.

Ned, a crusty bachelor, is the winner of a lottery jackpot worth £7 million. But his luck causes poor Ned to expire. News of the win, though, does not escape two pickled codgers (Ian Bannen and David Kelly), who go on to hare around on a motorbike in the nude while trying to convince the Dublin lottery rep that Ned is still alive. The desperate duo gradually realise they're going to have to share the pot if they have any hope of pulling this fairy tale off. A divisive prize is thus transformed into a romantic community fable in which the real winner is the coastline of the Isle of Man, where the film was actually shot.

Luck is not something that's ever come under the knife of Philippe Nahon in *Seul Contre Tous* (I Stand Alone). But Gaspar Noé's controversial film enjoyed an unfair slice of it by winning last year's Crit-



A truly awesome, evil thing that rips your expectations to shreds: Jeff Bridges and Tim Robbins in Mark Pellington's thrill-a-minute *Arlington Road*

ics' Prize at Cannes. I have rarely seen a more savage piece of celluloid. Here the life of Nahon's unemployed 50-year-old butcher is chopped out in squalid snapshots. There are no sentimental frills, just the brutal facts of a doomed marriage, an autistic daughter, a prison sentence for GBH and his shabby escape from Paris with his fat and heavily pregnant mistress.

We pick up his miserable story at his mistress's house. Nahon has managed to secure a job as a night porter in a dilapidated rest home. A patient dies. Nahon watches, moved only by how insignificant death is. He goes home to his bloated girlfriend, beats her pregnant stomach until he's made "hamburger pulp" of his unborn child, steals a gun and hitches back to Paris. It gets worse, much worse.

This is strong meat for cast-iron stomachs: an almost unbroken monologue of nihilistic

thoughts about the sheer unfairness of life. There is quiet rage at wasted years and a loveless life. There is the never-ending degradation of middle-aged poverty. "Well, drop by again," says one of Nahon's bankrupt clients after giving him the brush-off. "It's always a pleasure." Somehow I doubt many will pick up the invitation.

Nahon gives a monumental performance: watery-eyed and chillingly still. But, being locked up in his skull with his pulverising thoughts ranks highly in my list of all-time grimmest artistic experiences. This is life at the bottom of the barrel, a voyeuristic ritual of

LINKS

WEBSITES

Arlington Road: www.arlingtonroad.com

Waking Ned: www.fox.co.uk

A Night at the Roxbury: www.up.com

TELEVISION

Academy Awards - Live, Sunday, 8pm, Sky Premier

humiliating scrapings framed by grubby doorways and graffiti-covered walls. There is no such thing as a scenic view. Director Noé pulls some annoying stylistic tricks to lighten the load. Jarring jump-cuts are announced by the sound of a bullet going off in your ear. An invitation to leave the cinema is screened before the gruesome denouement. It's enough to put you off meat forever.

There have been some extraordinary films about boring: *The Set-Up*, *Raging Bull*, *When We Were Kings*. Liam McGrath's short, humble documentary, *Southpaw*, about the life of Francis Barret, a 19-year-old traveller from Galway who represented Ireland in the Olympic Games in Atlanta, has every right to be up there with them.

I say humble mainly because it refuses to make a meal out of the discrimination that dogs Irish travellers in their homeland. It's also impossible not to like Barret's big-heart-

ed bruise, whisked from training in a discarded lorry container to the giddy heights of the Atlanta Games. It's some story. His triumphs are as coolly appraised as his disasters. McGrath lets his characters, and the meddling local press, speak for themselves.

What he arrives at is no great mind-breaker in terms of poor-boy-made-good. But he does capture a genuinely stirring story of pride and prejudice, fabulous loyalties and sheer guts. The leap of faith made by a local barber, Chick Gillen, who funded a boxing club for the local travellers out of his own pocket, is no less inspired than Barret's own. This is brave filming, given that it could have been put down by a single punch, or a single lapse in judgment.

Things go downhill from here on. The Butabi brothers (Will Ferrell and Chris Kattan) are the Dumb & Dumber of the LA disco scene. To wit, no right-thinking nightclub

bouncer in *A Night at the Roxbury* will let them past the rope. These fortysomething Crimpenes kids have absolutely nothing going for them except their humour bypass and habit of getting kneed in the groin by girls with big cleavages. What duds.

Cheap gags and supremely kitschy sets are the touchstones of John Fortenberry's film, and they are as clearly illuminated as the exit signs in your local cinema.

The rest of the cast all vaguely remind you of someone more famous. Dan Hedaya's father is a dwarf clone of Robert De Niro; Loni Anderson's mother is a surgical reworking of Britt Ekland; and Richard Grieco (ShoWest Award-winner for Male Star of Tomorrow 1991) looks like, well, Richard Grieco (Male Never Was 1999). And there's no evidence that any of them has been to a nightclub in years.

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The Sunday Express



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Christopher Robby - The Daily Mail

"Moving and magnificent...The film is one of the few truly great films of this decade."
David Gatten - The Daily Telegraph

Fernanda Montenegro Marília Pêra Vinícius de Oliveira

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The world bows to Tinseltown

Geoff Brown laments the loss of international films swept away by the American movie mainstream



The last echoes of cinema's golden age? Beatrice Romand and Alexia Portal in Eric Rohmer's *An Autumn Tale*

beavered away from Sweden with back-up from Bo Widerberg. Nothing from Satyajit Ray in India, but Japan had the best of the old and new: Kurosawa's *Red Beard*, and the sexually explicit *Diary of a Shinjuku Thief* from Nagisa Oshima. Closer to home, New German Cinema, as it was called, was up and running.

Six films alone came from Czechoslovakia. Hungary meant Miklós Jancsó, master of the visually uplifting but baffling allegory (*Silence and Cry*, *The Red and the White*). The USSR thundered with Sergei Bondarchuk's old-fashioned but impressive *War and Peace*. Poland offered Andrzej

Wajda's edgy *Everything for Sale*. Even Yugoslavia was heard from, with a double-bill from the mischievous Dusan Makavejev.

Where are these film-makers now? What, indeed, has happened to the venues in London and elsewhere that showed their wares: the Academy, the Paris-Pullman, the Carneo-Poly? Redeveloped. Trapped in Hollywood. Gone to the big projection room in the sky. How easy it would be to grow misty-eyed.

But why have world cinema's identity and population changed so much? Politics

play an obvious part in Eastern Europe. By the late Fifties, it was easier to deviate from the Stalinist orthodoxy of socialist realism, but it only took some Soviet tanks or a change of government for film-makers' wings to be clipped.

Public fashion is a factor too. When Solidarity's battles in Poland regularly made headlines in the early Eighties, Polish films were much imported. When Poland stopped being news, audiences faded, and the films stopped being acquired. British interest in a foreign cinema can also dwindle if a star director stops performing. Since Satyajit Ray's death, India has almost fallen off the map: you won't see much sign of Sweden, either, since the retirement of Ingmar Bergman.

Once the taste for a country's cinema is lost, retrieval is difficult. Take Germany. From the late Sixties through the Seventies, the output of Werner Herzog, Wim Wende-

rs, Volker Schlöndorff, and the prolific Fassbinder kept everyone busy. Then Fassbinder died, Herzog's talent vanished, Schlöndorff and Wenders wandered off. Germany is producing films worth exporting again, but public indifference in Britain is huge.

The saddest spectacle is the decline in Asian cinema. Economic and political changes have stemmed the flow of visual treats from directors like Zhang Yimou or Chen Kaige; it would be tragic if Western sensitivity to the oriental eye and mind declined alongside.

This could easily happen. As more films are made, cinema-goers' memories get shorter, and critics are getting less able or willing to jog their elbow. A few distributors, such as Artificial Eye, stick by the old art-house gods. The new interest in Iranian cinema also goes against the trend. But in general world cinema audiences have drifted towards the mainstream: they want their flash bang wallop too. So rejoice in Rohmer's *An Autumn Tale*. Who knows, it could be a long winter.

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HERITAGE

Cornwall in eclipse

Braced for day of dark rites

On Eclipse Day, August 11, Cornwall's ancient sacred sites will be inundated with Pagans and tourists, Marcus Binney reports

In Cornwall they call him Prince of Darkness. He is Brigadier Gage Williams, charged with co-ordinating the county's response to the total eclipse that will strike West Cornwall on the 11th minute of the 11th hour on August 11. At worst, Cornwall fears an invasion of six million visitors causing water shortages, sewage lakes and even typhoid outbreaks — as New Age travellers, cosmologists, druids and assorted Pagans arrive to commune with earth, heaven, myth and mystery.

Brigadier Williams, who is preparing with Eisenhower thoroughness, sets out to dampen the worst fears. He doubts whether it is physically possible for more than 250,000 people to arrive by car per day, plus perhaps 20,000 by train and boat. Thus for six million people to arrive for the eclipse, roads would have to be at full capacity for 24 days both before and after the eclipse. That's rather more time than most of us can spare.

Nevertheless, the predicted pressure on local hospitals is a concern. "Giving birth during an eclipse is the ultimate for Pagans," says Brigadier Williams. "So the druids had a massive love-in in November — just what the health authorities don't want to know."

Officials are also worried about all-night raves at ancient sites. Locals have been seething at the appearance of a flyposted advertisement for a tribal gathering on moorland at Pen-an-Tol. A proposed rave at Men-an-Tol has prompted calls for farmers to plough the land.

Protective action is being co-ordinated by the Deputy County Archaeologist, Stephen Hartgroves. "We're expecting people to head for the hills and high ground where many of the ancient sites are congregated and which are likely to be free of mist. There are 1,500 monuments in the county, and records of 36,000 historic sites if mines and quarries are included."

Worse problems could come if the weather is wet and visitors camp for days or even weeks to get a front seat at key sites. "Lighting

fires, digging holes for latrines and clambering on stones are the worst things you can do at ancient sites," says Hartgroves.

Luckily, Pagans themselves may come to the rescue. The delightfully named ASLAN (Ancient Sacred Landscape Network) is producing a sacred sites charter for visitors: an extension of the Countryside Code. Andy Norfolk of the Pagan Federation explains: "Pagans follow a nature-based spirituality. The landscape is regarded as sacred, with circles and stones being sources of special power. The eclipse is seen as a time of power for change, we hope for the good."

Norfolk is a landscape architect who started the Cornish Earth Mysteries Group and became involved with the purchase of the Rollright Stones. He and his colleagues plan voluntary fieldwork to repair sites both before and after the eclipse, co-ordinated with local landowners and the Cornish Wildlife Trust. To avoid inadvertent damage, they are planning open celebrations at several sites including the Hurlers on Bodmin Moor.

"We are planning nothing that would make people feel uncomfortable," he promises. "We may use some prayers produced by the United Nations. It's common for Pagans to call the Quakers, the elemental spirits of the north, south, east and west."

This is mild compared with the celebrations planned by Ed Prynn, the Archdruid of Cornwall. He says: "Most archdruids, like me, are self-appointed. I was a quarryman until I had an accident."

Since then he has been busy erecting stones (the heaviest is 18.5 tons), including a stone circle, a rocking stone, a healing stone and a judg-

ment stone. Clearly he is a great believer in the power of the landscape. "There's not a lane in Cornwall where someone hasn't seen fairies or the little people," he says.

He's planning a week of festivities with a God and Goddess Night (dressing up encouraged), evenings of fortune-telling, and a sun dance (to discourage rain on Eclipse Day). A wedding stone will be erected on the day. Sir Rex Hunt sent him two stones from the Falklands. By contrast, the National Trust will close its houses for the day. "It's not so much a question of security, just that we won't have enough staff," says Jeremy Pearson, who adds that the NT's gardens will open at 1.30pm. English Heritage is closing Dartmouth Castle but preparing for crowds at Pendennis Castle, which is on the line of totality — as are St Mawes, Restormel, Totes and Berry Pomeroy.

Tim Smit who has restored the Lost Gardens of Heligan, one of Cornwall's principal attractions, sees the eclipse as a brilliant way of giving the rest of the world a taste of Cornwall. "It's vital that visitors have a pleasant time and don't get ripped off," he says.

The Trevithick Trust, a pioneer in opening up industrial sites, sees just such an opportunity for its Geevor Tin Mine, claimed as the first landfill at the line of totality. It has prepared a special caravan site with hard gravel bases, fresh water standpipes and 24-hour security. The trust's Stuart Smith welcomes visitors, as he is campaigning for this and other mines to be declared World Heritage Sites. "Cornish mining technology dominated the world scene in the 19th century. Cornwall was the byword for technical innovation leaving a unique landscape of engine houses, foundries, terrace houses and chapels."

By most people's reckoning Cornwall is better equipped in ancient sites than anywhere else in the country. *Historic Cornwall*, a map guide issued by the County Council, lists 135 sites open to the public.

ARTS

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Men-an-Tol flyposted advertisements for a "tribal gathering" on moorland near this celebrated ancient landmark have incensed locals

These include Neolithic burrows, ancient villages at Chysauster and Roughor, Iron Age hill forts at Trencom, Castle-an-Dinas and Warbstow as well as lighthouses at the Lizard, Trevos and Pendeen, art galleries at Newlyn and St Ives, gardens full of exotica at Trebah, Trel-

issick and Trewithen, and a secret wartime communication centre at Portreath. Now being built, but not quite ready for August, is the biggest attraction of them all: the £30 million Eden Centre, a series of glasshouses on the scale of the Waterloo Channel Tunnel terminus

which will house the most spectacular plant habitats in Britain. More than this, Cornwall has one of the finest collections of ancient churches in the country, commemorating Cornwall's many saints. But what will traditional churchgoers make of the influx of

Pagans? Peter Burman, former secretary of the Council for the Care of Churches, says: "The church is generous in spirit. Interest in the eclipse reflects the hunger people feel for mystery and otherness. The eclipse pricks curiosity to explore the mysteries of creation."

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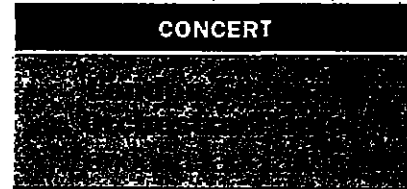
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CHANGING TIMES

Music mission to outer space

I looked into the future on Tuesday night. Galaxies and nebulae drifted across the sky overhead. A flautist wearing flashing red lights twiddled around the auditorium. Joy mutters rap rhythms, clangs and growls soared through loudspeakers and collided with jabbering live instruments conducted by Ross Pope. This was a forerunner of the *Galileo* experience: a project of the London Festival Orchestra, due for completion at the Millennium Dome and venues throughout the country in 2000.

The object is to forge fresh links between music, astronomy and science, and to engage children's minds in composition workshops. Members of the LFO have been sent out to schools with instruments, electronic equipment and two themes for consideration: Galileo the 17th-century astronomer, who peered through a telescope and found many wonders, like spots on the Sun; and Galileo the late 20th-century space mission. The sound material generated so far has been given



CONCERT

to a composer, Edwin Roxburgh, for transmutation into a mixed-media work, ultimately some 40 minutes long.

Roxburgh, an accomplished oboist and professor at the Royal College of Music, was a wise choice: any man whose catalogue includes works called *Nebula*, *Saturn* and *Stardust* (the piece played by the flautist) is obviously happy in outer space. His ear for sonority is acute, and the chunk of his *Galileo* so far performed happily avoids the eerie wails and throbs associated with Fifties science-fiction movies.

For inspiration, Roxburgh said, he used material generated with primary school

pupils. From the three workshop samples heard on tape, you could understand why. Two offerings from GSCE students hovered boringly close to rap and pop: not much broadening of the horizons there. But the primary schools' presentation was concocted afresh, conjuring up the icy surface of Europa, one of Jupiter's moons, through whispered syllables and unearthly sounds could enough to freeze the ears. Roxburgh's live music made merry with the intervals and tone colourings from the workshop material. If this is what outer space is like, we have nothing to fear.

A feeling persists, though, that if you heard Roxburgh's *Galileo* cold, there would be no reason to think of astronomy at all: in times before millennium grants, the piece would probably have been called *Metastasis IV*. Still, it was fun to hear, and the LFO's *Galileo* project is set to stimulate lot of minds, young and old, in the months to come.

GEOFF BROWN

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OPERA

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DUTTON, feeling perhaps that it has reached the end of the furrow in its excellent plough through the stars of English opera, has gone international. All the items on the present choice collection come from the immediate postwar years and many of them feature singers who were heard at Covent Garden in the late 1940s, either with visiting companies or as individuals. London orchestras provide most of the backing, generally admirably.

The set begins in cracking form with Margherita Carosio showing just how Bellini should be sung. Limpid and clear, in *Amina's* Act II aria from *Sonnambula*. Generally the soprano dominates. With the Countess's *Dove sono* from *Figaro*, Maria Cebotari reminds us that she was an early runner in the great Romanian tradition that was to pass through Cotrubas to Gheorghiu. Hilda Konecni outclasses many more famous rivals in the Marshall's monologue from *Rosenkavalier*. Only Margherita Grandi sounds past her prime as Elisabetta in *Don Carlos*.

RECITAL

ONE OF DI STEFANO'S EARLIEST recordings, Federico's lament from *L'Arlesiana*, is included. Very good it is too, as is a snatch of Luigi Infantino, airiness itself as the Duke in *Rigoletto*. Five prize baritones are led by Schöffel and Gobbi, the latter marvellously insinuating as Iago. The transfers are first class.

JOHN HIGGINS

HAYDN
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LONDON will be hearing plenty of the pianist Leif Ove Andsnes this summer when his own chamber-music festival from the Norwegian harbour-town of Risør visits the Wigmore Hall. For the time being, this latest release shows something of the delights of his Haydn playing: less considered and introspective than that of András Schiff, less highly-strung than that of Alfred Brendel.

CDs reviewed in *The Times* can be ordered from the Times Music Shop on 0345 023498

What Andsnes does so well is to recapture the excitement of a composer writing just at the time when the keyboard was undergoing its most radical changes. Andsnes pays homage to the echoes of harpsichord (for which Haydn wrote his earliest Sonatas) and of Baroque artifice in the brilliance of ornament and the wonderfully variegated hammering figuration of his Sonata No 30 in B minor. And he relishes the risks of the shapes of things to come in the C sharp minor Sonata with its fearless harmonic and dynamic explorations.

In between, the A major Sonata makes enough rhythmic play with Haydn's horn call to give something of a rude awakening to its dedicatee, Prince Esterházy, before tiptoeing through a Minuet whose sections cunningly reverse themselves on their reprise.

HILARY FINCH

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THOUGH never quite becom-

ing the Swedish Grieg that his early promise suggested, Wilhelm Stenhammar (1871-1927) nevertheless established himself as one of his country's most important musicians. His magnificent Second Symphony, a fascinating synthesis of German Romanticism and Swedish folk elements, has been recorded several times (twice by Neme Järvi). Now the latter's son Paavo enters the field with the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic, of which he is principal guest conductor. His reading is in places more studied than his father's, also more expansive (notably in the finale where he takes an extra three minutes). But that willingness to linger means that he drains every drop of expressivity and there is no palpable sacrifice in terms of momentum.

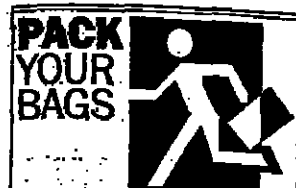
The couplings are the aspirational "symphonic overture" *Excelsior*, the *Reverenza* (a quirky minuet movement dropped by the composer from the *Serenade* in F), and a pair of delightful songs given by Sweden's most prominent mezzo, Anne Sofie von Otter.

BARRY MILLINGTON

★ Worth hearing
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هكذا من الذم

Bargains of the week: from rambling in the Peak District for single people to a peaceful break on the Tunisian island of Djerba



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A selection of last-minute holidays and travel opportunities at home, on the Continent and further afield, many at bargain prices

A WALK ending at a whisky distillery is among excursions on a Highlands package from Countrywide Holidays beginning on Sunday. Six nights' B&B and dinner at Dornoch Hotel costs £199, walking programme and picnic lunches included. Details: 01942 241432.

MORE rambling is on offer from Solo's, this time for singles in the Peak District over Easter, where three nights' half-board from April 2 costs £259. The company has a similar deal for golfers at Shrewsbury. Details: 0181-951 2800.

JERSEY should be at its best over Easter with spring flowers to the fore. Consort Hotels offers free car hire and

Sunday lunch as extras on three-night breaks at the Royal Hotel in St Helier, which include B&B, dinner and return flights from Gatwick or Southampton for £240. Modern Hotels offers four nights of B&B with catamaran crossing from Poole for £162. Details: Consort, 01534 726521; Modern, 01534 35511.

THE Lakes and a listed building form the Easter offering from Sunvil UK, which has two nights' dinner, B&B at the Grange 11 Ennerdale Country House Hotel from £109. Details: 0181-222 9788.

EASTER camp for the kids can still be booked between April 3 and 10 at activity centres in Norfolk and Staffordshire with Camp Beaumont. Prices start from £99 for short breaks and £208 for a week including full-board and everything from archery to quad biking. Details: 0171-922 1234.

THE West of Ireland is available at a good price over Easter from Irish Ferries Holidays. Drive to Penzance, sail to Rosslare between April 1 and 4 and spend a week travelling to Cork, Killarney and Limerick with B&B along the way for £336. Details: 08705 170000.

EUROPE

CYPRUS celebrates Easter in style and sunshine, and some reasonable deals are available even though it is a peak period. Enjoy the processions and culinary specialties on a week's self-catering holiday with First Choice for £249, with a flight from Gatwick on March 31, or a fortnight in Paphos with Eclipse for £389, with a flight from Manchester on the same day. Details: First Choice, 0870-750 0001; Eclipse, 0990 010203.

VATICAN CITY is one of the places to be on Easter Sunday and is possible on a week's coach tour to Rome with Leger. Depart from a wide choice of pick-up points in England and Wales on March 31 for the trip, which costs £189, including four nights' B&B in the spa resort of Fiuggi, an hour's drive from the capital. Details: 01709 839839.

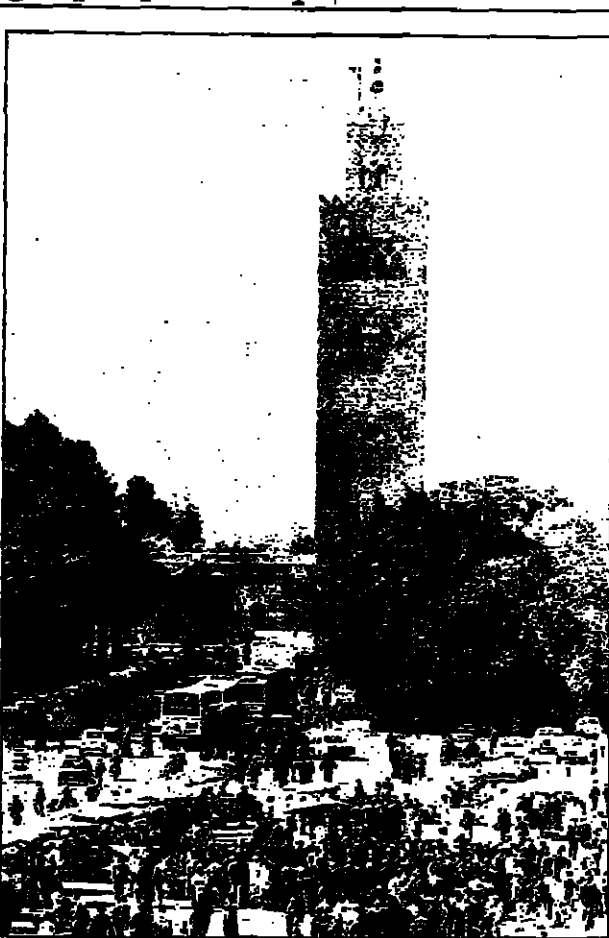
LONG breaks at good prices are rare at this time of year but Lann Poly has four weeks in a three-star hotel at Puerto de la Cruz, Tenerife, for £673, with return flights from Newcastle on Easter Sunday and half-board. Details from the company's Holiday Shops.

CAMPING on the Côte d'Azur over Easter is on offer from Canvas Holidays. A party of up to six will pay £271 for a week in a mobile home or £451 for a fortnight, starting between April 1 and 16 and including a short Channel crossing for car and passengers. Details: 01383 644000.

DAVY CROCKETT ranch is an alternative offering, and has the added advantage of being part of Disneyland Paris. Two nights in a mobile home that looks like a log cabin from Easter Sunday for two adults and up to four children costs £409 with Eurocamp, including a short Channel crossing for car and family. Details: 01606 787878.

LATE-SEASON skiing — cross-country and downhill — is possible on a long weekend in Gailo, Norway, with Intravel. Fly from Heathrow on April 8 and pay £429 for three nights' full board and ski hire. Details: 01653 628862.

TRAVEL after Easter and the bargains are better, with a fortnight's self-catering as far away as Rhodes available from £150 with Olympic Odyssey. Flights leave Gatwick and Manchester on April 21. Details: 0181-343 9090.



Enchanting Morocco: Djema el Fna in Marrakesh

LONG HAUL

NORTH AFRICA often misses out in these columns as it is only three hours' flying time from Britain but certainly not in Europe. To make amends here are a couple of contrasting offers. Tony Dawe writes:

Djerba, an island linked to the Tunisian mainland by a causeway, is uncannily peaceful for the region but has good beaches, is close enough to intriguing moonlike landscapes and on offer at good prices from Direct Line Holidays. A week's B&B from April 10 at a four-star hotel costs £305 with a flight from Gatwick and a fortnight is available for £80 more. Details: 0181-239 3399.

Morocco has even more to offer with mountains, desert, walled cities, ancient fortresses — and the most aggressive souvenir salesmen in the world. All can be experienced on a fortnight's tour from April 20 with Prestige Holidays for £1,195 with flights, half-board and entrance fees. Details: 01425 480400.

TRADITIONAL warm weather holidays are available from Co-op Travelcare with a fortnight's room-only break in Barbados costing £489, but be quick for this Airtrics holiday

starts with a flight from Manchester on Monday. Details: 0541 500388.

MAURITIUS is never cheap but Sovereign Worldwide is knocking £330 off short breaks to the Indian Ocean island starting between March 26 and 31. Five nights' half-board at a beach hotel costs £895, including flights from Heathrow or Manchester. Details: 0161-742 2224.

MALAYSIA is also available at a discount from Thomas Cook Holidays with a fortnight's B&B at the Shangri La Golden Sands, Penang, costing £635 with return flights from Heathrow. The hotel boasts good leisure facilities and a children's club. Details: 01733 418450.

All prices are per person and based on two travelling together and sharing a room unless otherwise stated.

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ATHLETICS

All roads lead to Balmoral for festival

By DAVID POWELL, ATHLETICS CORRESPONDENT

ON SUCCESSIVE weekends last April, Paula Radcliffe and Tegla Loroupe ran world best times. This April they will be appearing on the same bill in a two-day festival of road racing at Balmoral Castle. What price the snowman to be there as well?

Last year, there was April snow at Balmoral, but that did not stop Radcliffe annihilating the world best time for five miles. It was a memorable first year for the Compaq road races. The day had begun with Prince William and Prince Harry building a snowman

Edinburgh, but the date and venue have been moved. "The feedback we got from Balmoral last year was that the elite races were brilliant but could we not throw this open to the public, and that is what we have done," Foster said. "The people in Aberdeen say it will be the most beautiful run in Britain."

As beautiful as it is muscular so far as the talent on show is concerned, Loroupe broke Ingrid Kristiansen's 13-year-old marathon world best in Rotterdam last year and, though she is returning to Holland to defend her title, she has committed to Balmoral seven days later.

For the Compaq men's race, organisers have announced the inclusion of Paul Tergat, from Kenya, who stands on the threshold of history, for in Belfast on Sunday week he will attempt to become the first man to win five successive world cross-country titles.

Tergat, a former world record-holder for 10,000 metres, took up running only after being conscripted into the Kenyan Air Force in 1990. One of 17 siblings — his father had three wives — he is a man who thinks beyond the boundaries of running.

He shares an import-export business with Moses Tanui and the pair also run an athletics magazine. Sounds like another Brendan Foster — champion athlete turned successful businessman — in the making.

The festival is on the weekend of April 24-25, one week after the Flora London Marathon.

TO ENTER: Telephone 01538-702100, or write to: 1999 BUPA Great Caledonian Run, PO Box 512, Cheadle, Stoke on Trent ST10 4RJ.

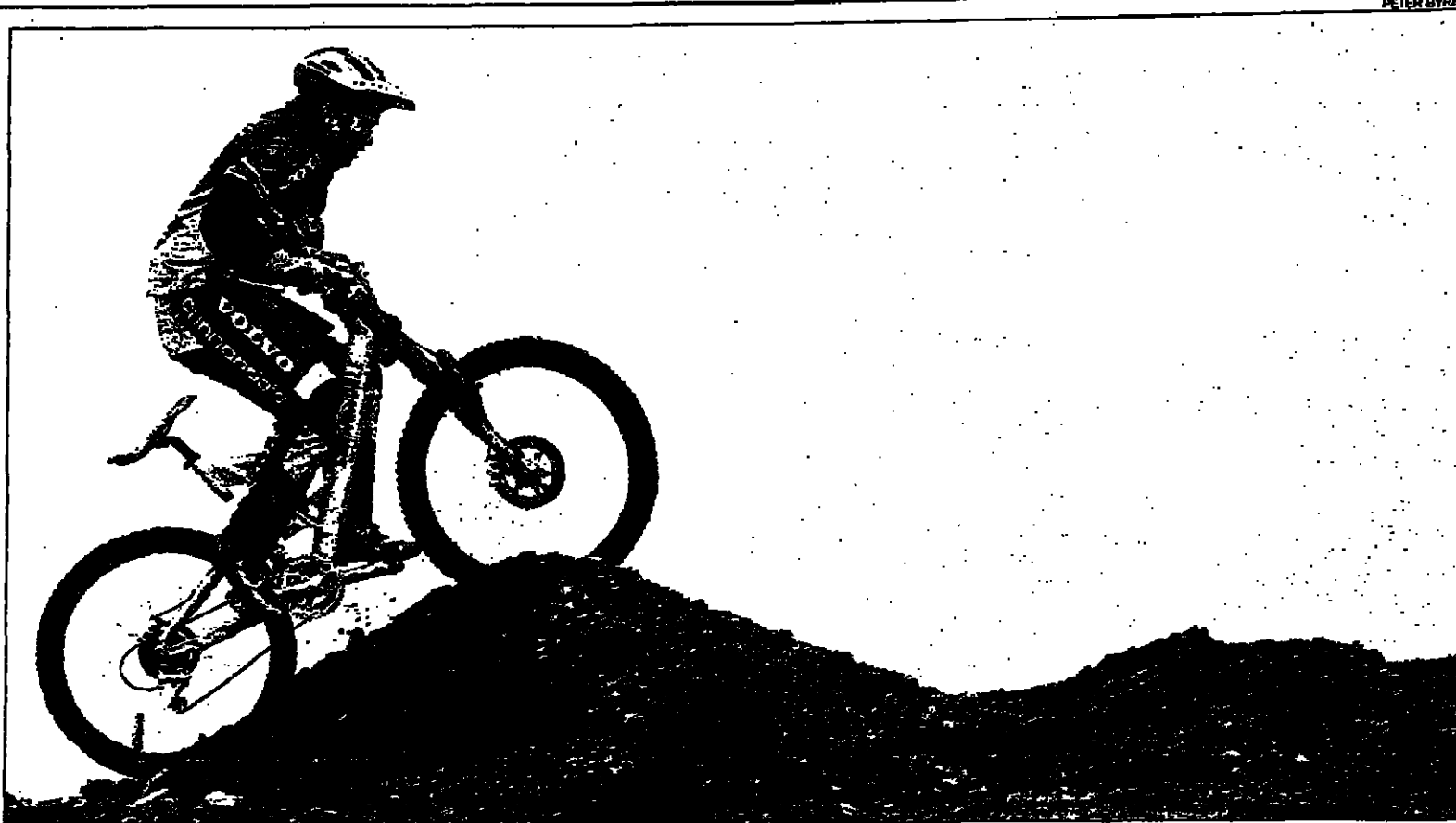


Radcliffe: defending title

and ended with Radcliffe melting away the opposition.

"The big innovation this year is that it is not going to snow," Brendan Foster, the former 3,000 metres world record-holder whose company puts on the event, said. If that cannot be guaranteed, one innovation that can be the throwing open of the royal grounds to a mass participation race.

After Radcliffe defends her five miles title on Saturday April 24, Loroupe will try to win, for the second successive year, the BUPA Great Caledonian Run over ten kilometres on the Sunday. Last year, it was held in October in



Wheel of fortune: Moseley's rising reputation has earned her a lucrative deal with one of the biggest teams in mountain biking, Volvo Cannondale UK

Moseley plots a downhill course

Signing for a leading mountain bike team has put a young British woman on the right route to success

The fat tubes and titanium nuts of the downhill mountain bikes are not yet welcome at the Olympic Games — unlike their cross-country cousins — but it is a fast-growing sport, big on glamour and money, with speed and drama guaranteed. This Saturday, in Cheddar, Somerset, another national downhill season gets under way.

Many more men than women have taken to the hills where, on courses that vary from three to eight minutes, speeds approaching 50mph test nerve as well as strength. A handful of women, though, are now skidding to the front, where they are able to earn a living from a sport still only a couple of decades old.

One such is Tracy Moseley, 19, from Malvern, who rode her first race five years ago and who, as a second-year biology student at Sheffield University, has signed a contract with one of the biggest teams, Volvo Cannondale UK. In doing so, she has become the envy of her older brother, Ed.

"He's ranked in Britain's top ten for men's downhill," Moseley said. "Because there are only about 30 women who race in the national events,

compared to more than 200 men, it's easier for the top girls to get sponsorship. Ed is always supportive towards me, but it must be hard for him because I've come along and got his dream first."

Moseley likened her contract to signing schoolboy football forms. "It starts off with enough to survive," she said.

"For me it means that I don't have to worry about working while I'm studying, because I'm getting a salary as if I was a professional. I get all my bikes and equipment, clothing and travel expenses, so I can compete in the world series and championships." Which will, during the summer months, send her zig-zagging her across Europe and the United States.

If she can improve on her couple of top-ten placings last season, the financial rewards could be high. "That's where you get into the big time," she said. "The best British guys would be on £60,000 to £80,000 a year and some of the top women I know have been asking £20,000."

SARAH POTTER



It was the generosity of one of the elite British women, Helen Mortimer, that initially helped Moseley on her way. "I'd just started racing and had very little kit," Moseley said. "I was in my shorts and T-shirt when Helen came up to me and offered to lend me her bike from the previous season. She's one of the top racers in the world and it was amazing, someone like that giving me that amount of help."

Mortimer had spotted a talent worth encouraging, though she could be forgiven for ruling her judgment when Moseley beat her for the first time last season. Now, with a custom-built Cannondale worth in excess of £4,000 beneath her, the new kid on the block hopes to shave yet more seconds from her race times.

Even with full body protection, hurtling down the high-speed slopes — dodging trees and jumping rocks — claims plenty of broken bones, but it has also built a few larger-than-life personalities. Missy "The Missile" Glove was, up until this season, the spearhead of the Volvo Cannondale team. The American is the most famous woman in the sport and reputedly earned \$500,000 (about £310,000) last year alone.

"It's a very social sport, anyway," Moseley said. "But Missy has always given me lots of help. Although she's not the top-ranked woman any more, she's got a past and personality that will always attract attention."

That past meant delivering Chinese food in New York to help fund sporting passions that included snowboarding and surfing. Moseley's route into downhill racing has been more sedate. "I was brought up on a farm so my main job was milking the cows," she said. "I've worked in a boarding kennels, walking the dogs to earn extra money, but that's about it."

A my spare time now is spent training for that like the event itself is over all too quickly. "I definitely want to give it my all once I've finished university," she said. "But I'll probably only last three or four years."

Whether the sport can sustain its rapid growth remains to be seen. "Bike manufacturers have put huge amounts of money into it," Moseley said. "but I do wonder if it's getting to the stage where it can't go much further. I don't worry about that because being paid is a bonus. I could ride downhill all day, because I love it."

SQUASH

Potters Bar shrug off cash fears with victory

By COLIN MACQUILLAN

POTTERS BAR, the poor relations of the Squash Rackets Association National Squash League, have banded through to their fourth consecutive semi-final with a 3-2 home win over Chichester that featured all but one of the players who first formed their squad in 1996.

Twice winners of the league, the Hertfordshire side are struggling financially after losing a sponsor last year and then facing an attack on their membership from a new local health club offering discount joining fees.

An emergency meeting of loyal members and players resulted in a determination to stay in the league. "The players agreed to back the club by taking reduced fees and even delaying payment until the members could organise summer events if there was a short-fall on ticket sales," Tochi Bhatt, the team manager, said. "It seems to have bred an even greater resistance to defeat than existed before."

The quarter-final showed the team's determination after Iain Higgins went down in straight games at second string to Ben Garner and Paul Carter, the Potters Bar team captain and new British over-35 champion, failed to match the speedy Tim Vail.

Jamie Davis dragged the home side back into contention with a 9-15, 15-6, 15-11, 15-5 third-string win over Mike Harris and Sue Wright contributed to the women's fifth string with a 9-6, 9-7, 9-6 win over Stephanie Brind.

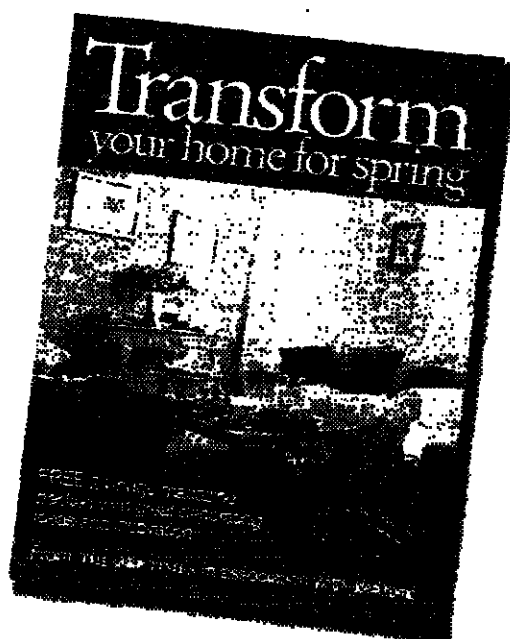
The players were in similar battling form when they took the title in 1996 and 1997, but the deciding match fell to Mark Cairns, the England No 3. He won the quarter-final 15-7, 15-3, 15-12 against Peter Genever at first string.

The first leg of the semi-finals on March 30 will take Potters Bar to Nottingham, who defeated Edgbaston Priory 4-1 in their quarter-final. The second semi-final is between UK Packaging, of Chingford, who overcame Devon and Exeter 5-0, and UNW Northumberland, of Newcastle, who won 3-2 against UniS Guilford.

30p

THE TIMES

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CHANGING TIMES

SHEEHAN on BRIDGE

By ROBERT SHEEHAN, BRIDGE CORRESPONDENT

The effect of the opening lead on the play of the hand can be quite extraordinary even if it does nothing whatsoever to help either side establish any winners. Take a look at this deal from the American Blue Ribbon Pairs and consider the play in Six No-Trumps, usually reached after South opened an optimistic 15-17 One No-Trump.

Dealer East	N-S game	Pairs
♠ K1075 ♥ KQ92 ♦ AQ ♣ K74	♠ A63 ♥ J108 ♦ J1094 ♣ QJ9	
♠ 984 ♥ 7654 ♦ 6532 ♣ 108	♠ QJ2 ♥ A3 ♦ K87 ♣ A9552	

S	W	N	E
1 NT	Pass	2 C	Pass
2 D	Pass	5 NT	All Pass

Contract: Six No-Trumps by South. Lead: ♠

Superficially it does not seem to matter what West leads — nothing appears to be any help to declarer at all. But look what happened.

The declarers who received a spade lead knocked out the ace and cashed all the spade and diamond winners before testing the hearts. Of course, if the same hand had held length in hearts and clubs he would have been squeezed. If not, the residual chance, that someone holds the jack and ten of hearts in a two- or three-card suit, comes in. Six No-Trumps makes

That looks straightforward enough, does it not? But at more than one table, West led a heart against Six No-Trumps. The six of hearts is a difficult spot

card to read — perhaps it could be from J1076. Although I think declarer should get it right, at least one declarer put in the nine of hearts at trick one and later regretted it.

Even if declarer passes the first test and plays low on the opening lead, South might be further tested by a crafty East, who can put in the jack of hearts and create an illusion of a finesse later on against the ten of hearts.

This sort of position, where a defender plays the higher of touching honours to persuade declarer into a losing finesse, comes up more often than is realised. Keep a look out for it when you can see that it is declarer and not your partner who may be fooled.

WORD-WATCHING

By Philip Howard

CARBONARI

- a. Fishy pasta
- b. Fishy conspirators
- c. Fish

CITRUL

- a. A bullfighter's sword
- b. A melon
- c. Popular rule by citizens

CROMORNE

- a. A geological era
- b. Cock-crow
- c. An organ stop

CASTOR

- a. The gladiator with a net
- b. A religious singer
- c. The beaver

Answers on page 54

KEENE on CHESS

By RAYMOND KEENE, CHESS CORRESPONDENT

Up and down

Today, in completing all of the decisive games from the Linares tournament, I give a win and a loss by the talented Ukrainian grandmaster Vassily Ivanchuk. At one time Ivanchuk was considered a future world champion and, indeed, he seemed capable of scoring wins against Kasparov. Ivanchuk, however, has a nervous disposition that often holds him back from achieving his maximum potential.

White: Peter Svidler
Black: Vassily Ivanchuk
Linares 1999

French Defence

1	e4	a6
2	d4	d5
3	Nc3	Bd4
4	e5	Bxc3
5	a3	Bxc3
6	bxc3	Ne7
7	Qg4	Qc7
8	Qg7	Rg8
9	Qd7	Qd4
10	Ne2	Nc6
11	f4	Bd7
12	Qd3	dxc3
13	Rb1	O-O
14	Ne5	Ne5
15	g3	Nb6
16	Ne2	Ba4
17	g5	Nb5
18	Bh3	d4
19	Bd2	Nb3
20	Bd5	dxc3
21	Qc3	Nc2
22	Qc7	Kc7
23	Rd1	Bc6
24	Bh3	Nb6
25	Rxc3	bxc3
26	Rd2	c5
27	Bg2	c4
28	b4	Nb3
29	N5	Rd2
30	Nc3	Rd2
31	N6	Rm3
32	N7	Rm3
33	Nc3	Kc5
34	Nc4	Nc4
35	Nc2	Nc4
36	Bc4	Rg3
37	Rb1	Rg3

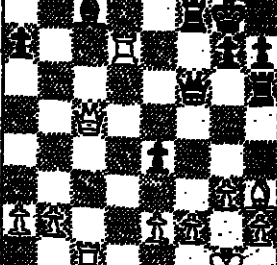
Siilian Defence

1	e4	Nf3
2	N3	Nf5
3	d4	exd4
4	Nxd4	e6
5	N5	d5
6	B4	Kf7
7	Bc3	Bc7
8	N1c3	N6
9	Bg5	a6
10	Bd3	Bg6
11	N3	Bd4
12	exd5	N4
13	Nc4	Bc5
14	Bd3	Bc6
15	O-O	Bc8
16	N3	d5
17	Qf5	d4
18	Ba2	Nc2+
19	Nc2	d4
20	N5	Rc5
21	N7	Kd7
22	Nc6	Rd5
23	Nc8	Rd8
24	Rd1	Rd7
25	Rd4	Rd4
26	Nc4	Bf8
27	c3	Rc5
28	f3	Bd4+
29	cd4	e5
30	c4	Rc5
31	b4	a5
32	bxc5	Kd6
33	Rd1	Rc3
34	Kf1	Rc5
35	Kc2	Rc2
36	Kc3	Rc2
37	Rd1	Rc2
38	Rd7	Rc2
39	Rd7	Rc2
40	Kc4	Black resigns

WINNING MOVE

By Raymond Keene

White to play. This position is from the game Burmakin-Guliev, St Petersburg 1998. Can you spot White's fine combination, which allowed him to exploit the slight weakness in Black's back row?



Answers on page 54

هكذا من الأهل

By DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

and Graham Henry must take the credit for that. The team obviously understands what Graham is trying to achieve."

Telfer opts for continuity but adds conditions

Johns decides to return to Ulster

champions, are riding the crest of a wave will be an added incentive for Johns who will win his fiftieth cap for Ireland against Scotland on Saturday. His departure will leave Saracens, who lost a useful utility back-five forward in Ben Sturmann to Bath last summer, seeking a quality replacement and they have already been linked with Scott Murray, the Scotland and Bedford lock.

RFU refuses to enter the Cotton trade

Carling helps

Will Carling will be the star guest at a charity match in support of Disability Sport, England on Sunday. It takes place at RAF Halton rugby club to raise funds for the charity that was started in 1961 by Professor Sir Ludwig Guttmann to provide sport and leisure opportunities for adults and children with disabilities.

Cronin tribute

Gavin Hastings and Lawrence Dallaglio will be among

[illegible][illegible][illegible]

**THE
CHELTENHAM
FESTIVAL**

4

**LIVE AND
EXCLUSIVE
ON CHANNEL 4**

**HIGHLIGHTS
TONIGHT AT 8.00**

Refs shown door
Richmond are not the only club to feel the effects of Ashley Levett's decision to pull out of rugby. The monthly meeting of the Hampshire RU Referees' Society was due to be held at Winchester RFC — also owned by Levett — on Monday, but the doors were locked and the lights turned out.

years in joining the RFU in setting up a grassroots programme to develop Tag Rugby in primary schools throughout England. You can discover what it's all about at Twickenham on Saturday when a demonstration will be held before England play France.

Front to fore

The Thormestons club in South Yorkshire could provide the entire front row for the England 18 Club side that takes part in an international festival in Edinburgh next

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William HILL
ALL BETS SUBJECT TO FLUCTUATION. WILLIAM

LIVE GOLF
10/3 VALEREN

CORRECT SCORE

VALEREN	SCORE	TO BE	CH
8/1	1-0	.....
16/1	2-0	.....
14/1	2-1	.....
50/1	3-0	.....
50/1	3-1	.....
50/1	3-2	.....
11/2	0-0	.....
5/1	1-1	.....
18/1	2-2	.....

Other scores on request

+

MILL FOOTBALL RULES APPLY. TO OPEN A

P WINNERS					
GGA 11/5 DRAW					
Kick-off 7.30pm Live on Channel 5					
HALF-TIME / FULL TIME					
SEA	VALERENGA	.....	VALERENGA	7/1
5/1	VALERENGA	.....	DRAW	14/1
2/1	VALERENGA	.....	CHELSEA	25/1
7/1	DRAW	.....	VALERENGA	9/1
7/1	DRAW	.....	DRAW	4/1
2/1	DRAW	.....	CHELSEA	4/1
5/1	CHELSEA	.....	VALERENGA	40/1
1/2	CHELSEA	.....	DRAW	14/1
3/1	CHELSEA	.....	CHELSEA	13/1

Bets void if match not completed
ALL ABOVE BETS - EXTRA TIME DOES NOT COUNT
TELEBETTING OPEN FROM 2.30pm
 CREDIT ACCOUNT FREEPHONE 0800 285 555

5. FIRST GOALSCORER

9/2	.....FLO (C)
9/2	.....ZOLA (C)
5/1	.....VIALLI (C)
15/2	.....CAREW (V)
9/1	.....KAASA (V)
9/1	.....SIMPSON (V)
12/1	.....DI MATTEO (C)
16/1	.....PETRESQU (C)
16/1	.....WISE (C)
11/2NO GOALSCORER

Other players on request.
Own goals do not count.

COUNT. *

TODAY

1992

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1999 年 10 月 1 日起, 凡在境内销售货物或提供应税劳务, 以及进口货物的单位和个人, 凡符合下列条件的, 均属于增值税一般纳税人:

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WILMINGTON
FESTIVAL

5

an awed reverence descends. They dare to whisper his name in the same breath as Arkle and can offer no more profound compliment. Yet as many folk on this side of the Irish Sea will not hear of defeat for the formidable grey. Tooton Mill.

To labour the credentials of those who vie for favouritism, though, is to miss the point. This is not a two-horse race and it does not merely concern the burgeoning careers of trainers Willie Mullins and Venetia Williams.



Last week, the intrigue over Williamson's choice of mount obscured the anticipation, muddled the waters. But he can see clearly now and he is mightily relieved to be partner-

A growing lobby questions Tecton Mill's ability to last upon the Cheltenham hill. True, he won the Hennessy Cognac Gold Cup in soft ground but, so too, say the doubters, did One Man, for whom the Gold Cup remained a climb too far. Williamson says he has no doubts. "I think he will definitely stay," he said firmly. Richard Dunwoody is not so sure. "I have a slight doubt about Tecton Mill getting the trip," he said. Coming from the rider of Florida Pearl, this

ALAN LEE 1. DORANS PRIDE 2. Teeton Mill 3. Sunny Bay	BOB WRIGHT 1. SEE MORE BUSINESS 2. Florida Pearl 3. Simply Dashing
CHRIS McGRATH 1. FLORIDA PEARL 2. Dorans Pride 3. Senior El Betrutti	THUNDERER 1. FLORIDA PEARL 2. Sunny Bay 3. Senior El Betrutti

Various different scenarios nag suggestively. Can Dorans Pride benefit from a more measured preparation and improve on his third places in the

Can Sunny Bay put one disappointment behind him and produce the form that put him on a par with the ver-

3.15 TOTE CHELTENHAM GOLD CUP CHASE

- 1**  **OR-PS2** **ADDINGTON BOY** 39 (C,D,F,G,S) F Murphy 11-12-0 _____ A **Mangrove** 130
Owner: Gott Foods Ltd.
10 wins from 27 starts, prize-money \$437,790
Will be saluted by the likely good ground, but not the force he promised to be and was a distant third to Florida Pearl latest.

2  **A-1121** **DORANS PRIDE** 80 (F,G,S) M Hourigan (tr) 10-12-0 _____ P **Carberry** 137
Owner: T Doran.
24 wins from 38 starts, prize-money \$497,253
Third in the past two renewals and looked better than ever latest when new front-running tactics were adopted. Sure to go close.

3  **212-11** **DOUBLE THRILLER** 21 (CD,F,G,S) P Nicholls 9-12-0 _____ J **Tennard** 159
Owner: R Wilkins
7 wins from 12 starts, prize-money £27,515
Buck Teston Mill here last April and twice an easy winner of soft races this time. The drying ground has not helped his cause.

4  **A-2322** **ESCARTEFIGUE** 39 (B,G,S) D Nicholson 7-12-0 _____ R **Johnson** 169
Owner: D Mercier
7 wins from 27 starts, prize-money \$165,178
Has played second fiddle to Teston Mill and Florida Pearl in big races already this campaign and may again be a support player.

5  **111-F1** **FLORIDA PEARL** 39 (C,F,G,S) W P Mullins (tr) 7-12-0 _____ R **Barwood** 158
Owner: Mrs V O'Leary
7 wins from 8 starts, prize-money £173,797
Lacks experience and has something to find on the forebook, but his potential remains untapped and he looks the one to beat.

6  **OB-SP2** **GO BALLISTIC** 47 (F,G,S) D Nicholson 10-12-0 _____ A **Debbin** 164
Owner: Mrs B Lockhart
8 wins from 42 starts, prize-money \$86,081
Showed more of his old dash when chasing home Cyfar Meira here in January but still clumsy and reliability is not his forte.

7  **A-12113** **IMPERIAL CACT** 82 (CD,G,S) R Hurley (tr) 10-12-0 _____ **Daadeth** 157
Owner: Lisselan Farms Ltd.
15 wins from 30 starts, prize-money \$351,971
Winner of this in 1996. Has not been easy to train since but not disgraced in top company this term and will go to post fresh.

8  **C-41P3** **SEE MORE BUSINESS** 47 (B,C,G,S) P Nicholls 9-12-0 M **A Fitzgerald** 160
Owner: P Barber & J Kaighly
10 wins from 19 starts, prize-money \$167,650
Carried out in fresh circumstances when a leading larney 12 months ago. Disappointing this term and looks up against it.

9  **A-4FOO2** **SENOK EL BETRUTTI** 26 (B,C,F,G,S) Mrs S Nock 10-12-0C **Uweylovi** 131
Owner: G Nock
9 wins from 36 starts, £161,379
Quirky, but has a soft spot for this place and will love the drying ground. Ran on well behind Teston Mill (Cm30) latest.

10  **A-322P2** **SIMPLY DASHING** 54 (F,G,S) T Esterby 8-12-0 _____ I **Wyler** 161
Owner: S Hammond
15 wins from 28 starts, prize-money £160,857
Smart performer granted good luck tonight although conditions were similar when he was only sixth to Cool Dawn last time.

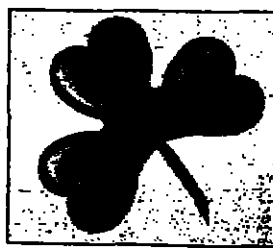
11  **52-11F** **SUNY BAY** 80 (D,G,S) S Sherwood 10-12-0 _____ G **Bradley** 175
Owner: Uplands Bloodstock
11 wins from 21 starts, prize-money £342,865
Cissy stayer and, as he goes well fresh, will have his supporters.
The drying ground is turning against him though.

12  **A-1111** **TESTON MILL** 26 (D,G,S) Miss V Williams 10-12-0 _____ R **Williamson** 160
Owner: The Winning Line
12 runs from 16 starts, prize-money £191,605
Has carried all before him this season and looks the form pick.
However, he is speedy and there remains a doubt about his stamina.

13  **11-1F1** **UNSKINKABLE BOXER** 28 (D,G,S) M Pipe 10-12-0 _____ A **P McCoy** 142
Owner: P Green
8 wins from 25 starts, prize-money £79,674
This novice has not looked a natural over fences and would be a much bigger

[illegible]

FLORIDA PEARL, trained to the minute by Willie Mullins, can fulfil all hopes and expectations by landing the Cheltenham Gold Cup (3.15) today. A winner at the meeting the past two years, his high cruising speed should allow Richard Dunwoody to lie handy before pouncing on the run up the hill. Elsewhere on the card, confidence in Knife Edge (2.00) and Le Cowdrey (2.35) is high.

[illegible][illegible]

FLORIDA PEARL
8 races, 7 wins

"Florida Pearl is the fastest horse in the race. He is a strong horse and I don't see the final climb up the hill as any great problem. I'm confident he will not let us down."
- Willie Mullins

TEETON MILL
18 races, 12 wins

"It's perfectly possible that he will be beaten by a better horse on the day. However, I don't feel he will be beaten for lack of stamina because he's won over three and a half miles, staying on."
- Venetia Williams

DORANS PRIDE
38 races, 24 wins

"His preparation has been a little different this year. We haven't run him so often and he's been fresh since Christmas. He's never had a hiccup and he's only been forgotten because there is always a younger kid on the block."
- Michael Hourigan

ROB WRIGHT
2.00 Afarad 3.55 Celtic Abbey
2.35 Anzum 4.30 Space Truckee
3.15 See More Business 5.05 MR STRONG GALE (nap)
5.40 Amitee
Timekeeper's top rating: 2.00 KATARINO.
Our Irish Correspondent: 2.00 Knife Edge. 2.35 Le Coudray. 3.15 Florida Pearl. 3.55 Irish Stout. 4.30 Space Truckee.
Carl Evans: 3.55 Coole Abbey.

(Grade I: 4-Y-O: £45,960: 2m 1f) (23 runners)

106	FF9F4A1	BALLYCROSS 22 (S) (McC P) Dark M-Pe 1-10	A P McCoy	59
		(Dark blue, yellow stars, double on sleeves, yellow cap)		
104	125365	CHARLES 18 (S) (McC P) Dark M-Pe 1-10	D Gallagher	111
		(Purple, white stars on sleeves; no slanders, white cap)		
106	21	CORNICHE 13 (S) (Marty C) Keltan 11-0	L Harvey	101
		(Yellow, dark blue stars; dark trace cap)		
106	1411111	DANGERUS PRINCE 17 (S) (McC P) Epsilon 11-0	N Williamson	122
		(Royal blue & red, ruffled collar, flowers scattered all over)		
101	EMPEUS 51 (S,M) (M Pe Racing Club) M-Pe 11-0	R Greene	105	
		(Black, white sleeve diamond; slanders on sleeves, white cap)		
106	451	FROZEN GARDEN 19 (S) (Stacy H) M-Me 11-0	P Gathery	110
		(Pink, white sleeve diamonds)		
109	3	GRESHAM 20 (A) (Hedley) M-Pe 11-0	C Macasky	67
		(Orange, olive green stars on body and cap)		
106	3	INCEPTA 19 (Racing Thoroughbred) P-S Macdonie 11-0	K Gade	64
		(Red, white stars, black sleeves)		
111	3P56	MILNER LITE 5 (M's S-L) P-Race 11-0	M Batorino	80
		(Red and black (quartered), red sleeves, black stars)		
10	4P-3111	KATHARINE 39 (G,S) (Wiley-Clooney) N Henderson 11-0	M Fitzgerald	103
		(White, orange sleeves)		
113	1111	NOPE 19 (R) (M's S) Lezaron M-J D'Urban 11-0	T Reid	110
		(Blown, red collars (black sleeves and sleeves, quartered cap)		
114	3124	NEW BIRD 39 (P) (Clarion) N Henderson 11-0	R Johnson	106
		(Black, white quarters, black sleeves, red and white striped cap)		
115	24	NOVELLART 47 (Rockford) P-Henderson 11-0	R Drummond	86
		(Yellow, dark blue chevrons, diamonds on sleeves, yellow cap, black diamond)		
116	15	PIPED ABORDA 142 (S) (P's M's) (N Jones) M-Pe 11-0	A Maguire	90
		(Dark green and yellow plaided, sleeves bordered, dark green and yellow quartered cap)		
117	12	SOMLEY PRINCESS 19 (S) (Hammond) N Hudson-Daniel 11-0	D Lwyer	104
		(Blue, light blue stars)		
118	12721	SHARPTEST FIGHTER 19 (G,S) (S Hanning) F Escanty 11-0	E Wyley	126
		(Red, white stars, emerald green sleeves, white armbands; emerald green cap)		
119	2	STREET FIGHTER 50 (F Ennes) P Hobbs 11-0	D Bradley	77
		(Light blue, yellow stars; sleeves and soles on cap)		
1140	TAKE A THIRN 19 (S) (McC P) Yellow-Green T-Kelly 11-0	A Thomson	102	
		(Light blue, light blue sleeves, red armbands and cap)		
121	325	THE GENE GENIE 39 (Photography Racioli) M Haven-Elli 11-0	B Powell	101
		(Maroon, grey chevrons)		
122	20	MISS PARA 21 (GF) (McC C, Phillips) M-Pe 10-0	J Murphy	74
		(Grey, black stars, armbands and star on cap)		
123	211112	MISS ORPHAN 30 (D,F,L,G,S) (Kays) Pe 11-0	R Thornton	115
		(Black, white stars, white sleeves, white cap, white star)		
BETTING: 1-4 Kaituma, 6-B Daengus (Daengus), 7-Taylor (Eve), 8-Slimly (Ellie), 10-1 Almad, 8-Ba Sals, 16-1 The				
Grains, 20-1 Balgachay, 30-1 Penpridd, 25-1 Miss Orphan, 23-1 others.				
© 1998 UPGRADE 11-0 C Lewynell 11-1 M Twilston Deans 11-0				

(Grade I: £57,500: 3m 110 yd) (12 runners)

- | | | | | | | |
|-----|--------|---|---------|---------------|------------|-----|
| 202 | 711-21 | DEANEO'S REEFA (D.G.S.) (Hoping M Port) | 11-7-10 | ... | A McCreary | 688 |
| | | (dark blue, white stripes; cast blue diamonds, white chest) | | | | |
| 203 | 721-44 | GO-NOBIAL (R.D.F.) (Meralda, Dawn & Jett) Jefferson | 6-11-10 | L. Myster | 79 | |
| | | (dark blue, white stripes; orange chest) | | | | |
| 204 | 446-13 | JUNUS4 (J.D.S.) (W. Sturt) J | 11-7-10 | J. Murphy | 147 | |
| | | (dark blue and white check; dark blue stripes; cast, dark blue chest) | | | | |
| 205 | 26-345 | KERNAN (J.S.) (M. Archey) H Tyecon-Dawn | 6-11-10 | C Llewellyn | 147 | |
| | | (dark blue, white stripes; orange chest) | | | | |
| 206 | 5-1111 | LE CODYDRA 46 (G.S.) (McMahan) A P'Dines (P) 5 | 11-7-10 | C F Swan | ... | |
| | | (emerald green; orange hooped, hooped, cast) | | | | |
| 207 | 111-10 | LORD JIM (D.G.S.) (M. Archey) J | 11-7-10 | M. Fitzgerald | 86 | |
| | | (dark blue, white stripes; orange chest) | | | | |
| 208 | 121-38 | OCEAN HAWK (R.D.F.S.) (M. Thorne) H Tyecon-Dawn | 7-11-10 | J. Maude | 147 | |
| | | (light blue, orange chest; light blue stripes, light blue and orange contrasted cast) | | | | |
| 209 | 52-354 | PADDY'S RETINA (D.G.S.) (M. Archey) H Tyecon-Dawn | 7-11-10 | A. Jorgans | 101 | |
| | | (emerald green; white hoops and stripes, orange cast) | | | | |
| 210 | 30-391 | TURPOLE 30 (S.S.) (H. and W. Whiting) M. Hestley | 3-11-10 | M. A Dorsey | 134 | |
| | | (dark blue, white stripes; orange chest) | | | | |
| 211 | 1-1111 | LADY PERSEIDA 47 (D.G.F.S.) (M. Hestley) 3 | 11-7-10 | N. Williamson | 168 | |
| | | (dark green; dark green stripes, yellow cast) | | | | |
| 212 | 111211 | SALLIE'S GIRL (R.D.S.) (J. Shugrue) H Mende (R) | 6-11-10 | P. Carbery | ... | |

(Grade I: £149,600; 3m 2f 110 yd) (13 runners)

TRAINERS			JOCKEYS			
Wins	Runs	%	Wins	Runs	%	
Mess V Williams	10	20	34.5	42	157	25.1
W P Mullins	5	18	27.8	33	156	21.2
R Doran	1	11	11.1	10	107	10.3
M J. Parnell	12	57	17.9	10	117	14.5
C Egan	4	23	17.4	6	42	14.3
K Bailey	10	67	14.9	19	152	12.5
M Pipe	44	269	14.7	9	41	12.2
J Old	5	58	13.8	16	132	12.1

BLUNKERED FIRST TIME: Cheltenham: 2.00 Take A Turn. 3.15 See More Business. 3.15 Senior El Betruti. 3.55 Tintops. 4.30 Lake Karba. 5.40 Ginger Fox. Hexham: 4.50 Timbucktoo. Lingfield Park: 2.20 Courtney Gym. 4.40 Shogun. 5.15 Famous.

401 2F31-5U ANDERMATT 21 (G.S.) (J Cornwell) J Macle 12-12-0 _____ Mr J R Cornwell 105


- [illegible]

501 21545U LAKE KARIBA 19 (B.B.F.D.G.S.) (P Barber) P Nichols: 8-11-10 _____ J Tizzard 140

[illegible]

هكذا من الأسفل

FREE £25 B
WHEN YO
STAKE £2



TOTE CHELTENHAM

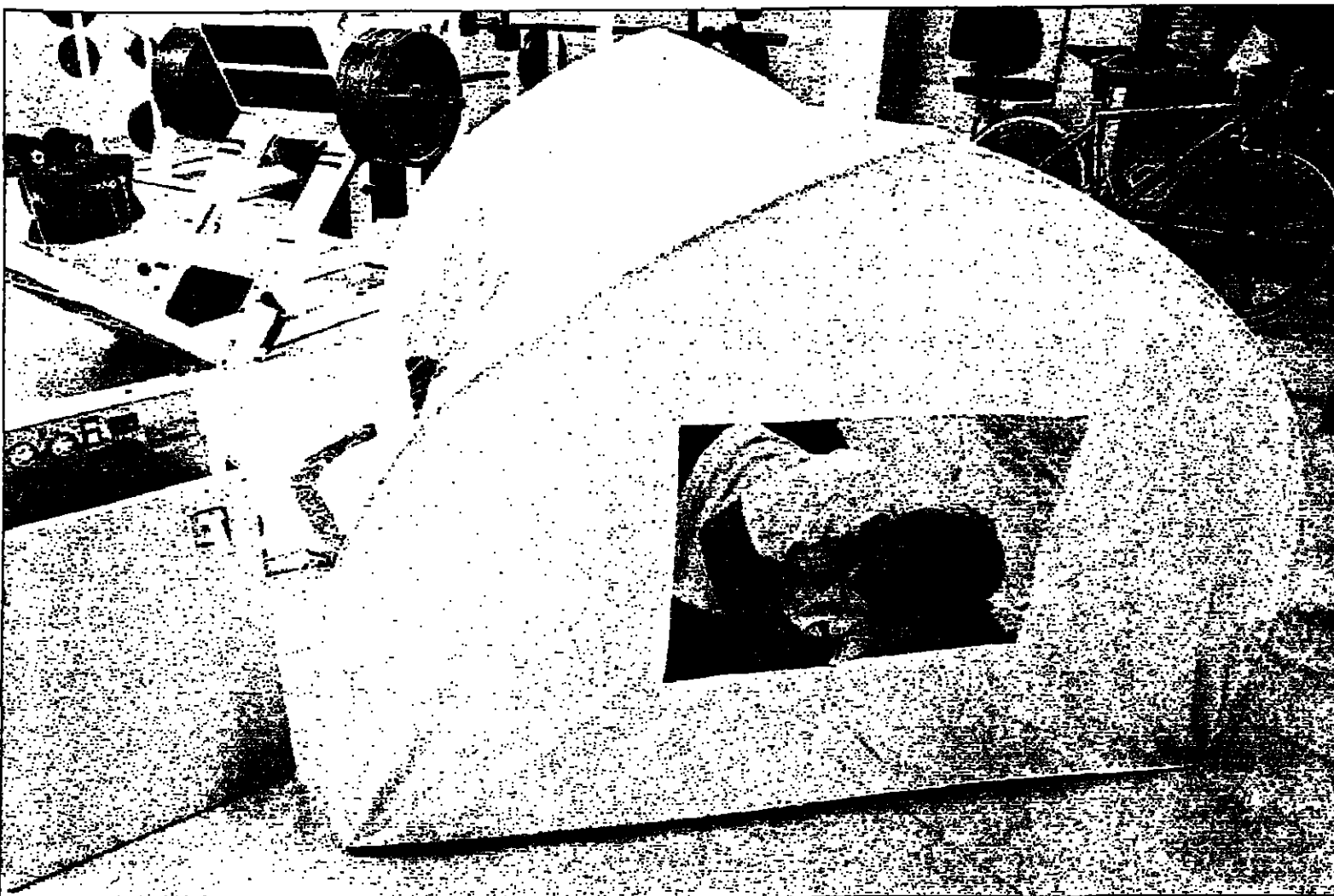
5/2	Flora	10/1	Stallion
2/1	Imogen	10/1	Stallion
5/1	Griffin	10/1	Stallion
7/1	Boat	10/1	Stallion
7/1	Education	10/1	Stallion
5/1	Sam	10/1	Stallion
5/1	Sunny Boy	10/1	Stallion

***FREE £25 B**

0800 444

TELEPHONE

WILLIAMS



Sleeping partner: Wallace's tent simulates altitude, using the latest high-tech gadgetry in an attempt to improve performances on the track

Tent to take breath away

If you dream of the ultimate in lazy ways to get and keep fit, then this could be for you. The idea is that you get fitter and boost your endurance simply by lying in bed. It's the latest high-tech gadget to come out of sports science and it promises to turn your bedroom at home into a mountain top.

It was dreamt up by a British cyclist and engineer, Shaun Wallace, who lives and trains in the United States. He was a Great Britain Olympic team member in Los Angeles in 1996 and twice broke the world record (amateur and professional) for the flying kilometre.

Since he left Nottingham University with a degree in engineering in 1983, Wallace has been a top competitor in cycling — a tough endurance sport in which many riders have been notorious for abusing the rules and their bodies by the illegal use of blood-doping and drugs — particularly EPO.

The aim of many of these outlawed procedures is to mimic the natural benefits that sportsmen get from living or training at altitude. Many sports, including cycling, swimming and running, are highly dependent on the body's ability to take in and

metabolise oxygen and altitude training has been part of sport for years.

In some events, such as long-distance running, athletes from high-altitude countries such as Kenya and Ethiopia have dominated relentlessly. Time spent at altitude causes several adaptations to take place in the body, but probably the most significant is an increase in red blood-cell count. This knowledge sent athletes racing for the hills, but not only is altitude training expensive and inconvenient, but once you are halfway up a mountain it is impossible to train as hard and fast as you can at sea level.

'It can simulate altitudes up to 9,000ft'

The latest research shows that to get the best results you have to "live high" but "train low". Two years ago, scientists took a group of 39 competitive runners and split them into three groups. Thirteen lived and trained at sea level, thirteen lived and trained at 2,500 metres and thirteen lived at 2,500 metres but travelled down to 1,250 metres to train. The last group vastly outperformed the other two groups over a 5,000 metres run, with improvements of 40 seconds in 17 minutes. Such research has led to a vogue among elite athletes to move to places such as Colorado Springs, where they can effectively commute up and down the mountains. The same theory lay behind the invention by Professor Igor Gamow of the Gamow Hypobaric Chamber, a claustrophobic coffin-like box that could provide athletes or mountaineers with the reduced air pressure experienced at altitude.

Another method of simulating altitude is to use cylinders of nitrogen to reduce the percentage of oxygen in the air. This procedure has been tried by Scandinavian Nordic skiers, who lived in quarters specially converted by the researchers. Heikki Ruskka, to contain only 15.3 per cent of oxygen (compared with a normal 20.9 per cent).

After four weeks of the nitrogen treatment, the skiers' red blood-cell count rose by 7 per cent and their performances improved accordingly.

Wallace, in his attempts to go ever faster on his bike, has tried it all. "I've used altitude training as part of my preparation for years," he said. "I was always trying something new. For two years I used a hypobaric chamber, which I took to the Olympics in Atlanta.

"These things work well, but they're very hard to move around. So I started working with experts to devise an alternative — a portable tent that can be erected in minutes over any bed, at home, in a hotel, even at the Olympics.

"This tent, rather than simulate altitude by reducing the pressure of the air, we have reduced the percentage of oxygen within it. This triggers the body to adapt and you literally increase your oxygen-carrying potential while you sleep."

The tent, which folds to the size of a suitcase and weighs fewer than 70lb, utilises hot-air balloon technology. It can fit a double or queen-size bed



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and once you have zipped yourself inside, you can still look out on the world through three large vinyl windows.

It is already proving popular among altitude-obsessed athletes. The British Cycling Federation has one and it has been tried by Britain's leading mountain-bike rider, Caroline Alexander.

Others who have been spending their nights in the magic tent include Paula Newby-Fraser, eight times the Hawaii Ironman world champion; the New Zealand cycle champion, Lee Vervaeke; and the world champion triathlete, Michelle Jones.

The tent can simulate any altitude up to 9,000 feet and Wallace reckons that for best results you should spend six to eight hours a night in it for ten weeks before competition. And, yes, you can sleep two in the tent at the same time — as long as the bedroom is cool.

Whether the altitude tent really works is a matter of debate and needs some serious independent research. What might keep you awake at night is the price — it sells for \$5,995 (about £3,375). But there are always plenty of athletes who will pay any price to get to the top of the mountain.

'You can sleep two in it at the same time'

JOHN BRYANT



Wallace riding high

EQUESTRIANISM

Billington determined to make up for lost time

By Jenny MacArthur

A TIMELY telephone call has bolstered Geoff Billington's chances of qualifying for the World Cup final when he competes in the Dutch qualifier at 's-Hertogenbosch this weekend. Having misread the World Cup rules, Billington thought he was not allowed to ride his top horse, It's Otto, this weekend — because he has now competed in three qualifiers in succession — and was resigned to riding Niko, his second string.

"I was rung up on Monday by someone who knew the rules better than me and told that as there had been a two-week break between the Bologna and Paris qualifiers it was all right to continue with Otto," Billington said yesterday.

Although lying eleventh in the European League — from which the top 19 qualify for the final in Sweden next month — there are two more qualifiers to come and Billington needs points this weekend. His conspicuous failure to achieve any in Paris last weekend — where he incurred half a time fault in the opening round — has sharpened his resolve.

"I couldn't believe I had done that," Billington said. "It was only when I heard the crowd shouting 'Allez, allez' as I jumped the last fence that I realised I was slow. But we're going to put the job right on Sunday."

Robert Smith and John and Michael Whitaker make up the British complement at the event. Di Lampard, with Abberval Dream, has had to withdraw because her father is ill. The foreign entry is headed by Ludger Beerbaum, of

Germany, the European champion, who had a stylish win on Priamos last week in Paris.

The Whitakers will not be under pressure this weekend. Fifth and sixth in the league, they are virtually assured of their places at the final. Nevertheless, both aim to improve on Michael had four faults on Ashley in the first round and John finished eighth — the best Briton — after a frustrating four faults in the jump-off.

on Virtual Village Heyman. Smith, who has only one top horse — Senator For The Best — at the show, may not even compete in the qualifier. His sights are set on the Grand Prix — also on Sunday — in which he has the chance to secure a £35,000 bonus.

The event is part of a series that offers a bonus for the winner of two out of the three grands prix of Amsterdam, 's-Hertogenbosch, and Rotterdam in August. Smith won Amsterdam on Senator For The Best last November.

WORD-WATCHING

Answers from page 48

CARBONARI

(b) The members of a secret political association formed in the kingdom of Naples during the French occupation under Murat, with the design of introducing a republican government. In Italian the word means coal-burners. "In 1799, when driven to the forest of the Abruzzi the republicans are believed to have disguised themselves as charcoal-burners. In the course of 20 years the name Carbonari was borne by a society, or confederate societies, ranging all over Italy."

CITRUL

(c) The Water-Melon (*Cucumis Citrullus*). Also applied (both in French and English) to the Pumpkin. The Old French name from the 13th century. It comes from Latin *citrulus*, so called from its colour. Sam Johnson, in his *Dictionary*, "Citrul, the same with pumpkin, so named from its yellow colour."

CROMORNE

(d) A reed-stop on an organ. Also called Krummhorn and Cromorna. A corruption of the German for "crooked horn". "Krummhorn, Cromorne, Cromona, Clarinet, Corno-di-Bassetto. An Organ Reed Stop of 8 feet size of tone."

CASTOR

(e) The beaver. From the ancient Greek, probably for a foreign word. The Sanskrit *kasturi* means musk. "The sacs are cut off from the castors when they are killed."

SOLUTION TO THE WINNING MOVE

Solution: 1 B6+ Qx6 (1... Kx8 2 Qx8+ Qx8 3 R7 is decisive) 2 Qx8+ Kx8 3 Rxc8+ Qx8 4 Rxc8+ Kx8 5 Rg7 and White easily wins the end-game.

TELEVISION CHOICE

Designs on a sporting life

Making It
BBC2, 7.30pm (not Scotland)

This engaging new series focuses on young designers, starting with two transport design graduates, Dean Carbis and Toby Birkenhead, fresh out of Coventry University. They have won a three-month attachment to update and rethink sports shoes for Reebok in Boston, which has been struggling against growing opposition from Adidas and Nike. Dean's brief is to redesign the laced (and potentially dangerous) shoes used in motor racing. Toby is to redesign football boots for the New England Revolution team. From the moment they settle into their leafy, luxurious surroundings we follow their progress on the drawing board, and their interviews with footballers and drivers, about what they went through to the final launch of their prototypes.

Top Gear
BBC2, 8.30pm

The series returns in some style as the presenter, Tim Needell, driving a mighty powerful McLaren F1, sets a new British speed record. The car is clearly not for wimps: it is powered by a 6.1 litre BMW V12 engine. Needell's target is the 180.4mph record set by Colin Goodwin in a Jaguar XJ220S in 1995, on the two-banked bowl of Millbrook Proving Ground, in Bedfordshire. And no, he doesn't take it in first time — but he does eventually, hitting a top speed of more than 200mph. Also on the show: a new face (but familiar to viewers of Channel 4 and Channel 5) in James May, test driving the Rover 75 en route to Seville. Can this first all-new Rover car for 23 years turn its company's fortunes around?

Every Woman Knows a Secret
ITV, 9pm

A three-part drama, based on the bestselling novel by Rosie Thomas. The "secret" shared by Jess (Siobhan Redmond) and Rob (Paul Bettany) is a love that dare not speak its name... they are separated in age by nearly a quarter of a century



Siobhan Redmond (centre) stars in Every Woman Knows a Secret (ITV, 9pm)

and he was at the wheel of the car that plunged over an embankment, killing Jess's son. She, being divorced, had brought up the 20-year-old Danny on her own and refuses point blank to believe what the police are saying about his alleged assault and rape before the accident. So how, you might wonder, can this grief-stricken mother get it together with her son's murderer?

Horizon: New Asteroid Danger
BBC2, 9.30pm

Is there any truth in the notion — forget what Hollywood has shown us in films such as *Deep Impact* and *Armageddon* — that a doomsday asteroid could smash into the Earth and put paid to civilisation as we know it? It may have happened to the dinosaurs but, say scientists, it is unlikely that an asteroid of such size could appear again, at least in the foreseeable future. What about smaller chunks of rock from outer space? In Siberia, in 1908, one of these flattened 2,000 square kilometres of forest. And it is these smaller rocks which worry the scientists because they are the hardest to track. "This means we could lose a capital city such as Washington, DC overnight with no warning," says one. Elizabeth Cowley

RADIO CHOICE

Performance on 3
Radio 3, 7.30pm

The mezzo-soprano Sally Burgess is part of an impressive list of soloists in a performance of Verdi's *Requiem*, recorded last July at Symphony Hall in Birmingham, a venue increasingly visited by the microphones of Radio 3. Verdi's Mass is among the most-performed works on the classical repertoire and the reasons for its enduring appeal are evident from the opening bars: this is a musical triumph, and its ability to move the listener transcends religious boundaries and takes all who hear it into a sublime experience. For this performance Sir Edward Downes conducts the BBC National Orchestra and Chorus of Wales, augmented by the Mendelssohn Choir from Pittsburgh.

RADIO 1 (BBC)

6.30am Zoe Ball 9.00am Simon Mayo 12.00pm Jo Whiley 2.00pm Mark Radcliffe 4.00pm Chris Moyles 5.45pm Newsbeat 6.00pm Dave Pearson 6.15pm The Evening Session 10.00pm Trade Update 10.10pm John Peel. With a session by Tim 12.00pm Andy Kershaw 2.00pm Dave Waller 4.00pm Scott Mills

RADIO 2 (BBC)

6.00am Alex Lester 7.30am Sarah Kennedy 9.30am Ken Bruce 12.00pm Steve Lamacq 2.00pm The Evening Session 10.00pm Trade Update 10.10pm John Peel. With a session by Tim 12.00pm Andy Kershaw 2.00pm Dave Waller 4.00pm Scott Mills

RADIO 5 LIVE (BBC)

5.00am Morning Reports 6.00am Breakfast 9.00am Nicky Campbell 12.00pm The Midday News 1.00pm The Cheltenham Festival. Gold Cup action presented by John Inverdale and Clare Balding. 2.00pm News 3.00pm The Thursday Match: Valencia v Chelsea in the Cup Winners' Cup 8.30pm On the Line 10.00pm Late Night Live 1.00am All Night with Rhod Sharp

TALK RADIO

6.00am The Big Boys Breakfast 9.00am Scott Chisham and Sally Jones 12.00pm Justin Wright 1.00pm Anna Reardon 4.00pm The Sports Zone 7.00pm Valencia v Chelsea 10.30pm James White 1.00am Ian Collins

VIRGIN

6.30am Chris Evans 9.30am Russ Williams 1.00pm Nick Abbot 4.00pm Harriet Scott 6.45pm Pete and Gail 10.00pm Mark Forrest 1.00am James Martin 4.30pm Richard Allen

RADIO 3

6.00am On Air With Petroc Trelawny, Poulenc (Aubade), Schumann (Konzertstunde), Walton (Spiritus Mundi and Fugue) 9.00am Masterworks With Peter Hobbday, Schubert (Symphony No 5 in B flat), Debussy (Chansons de Bilitis), Ravel (Concerto in F), Liszt (Sonata in E flat, H 152) 10.30am Artist of the Week: Gillian Weir 11.00am Sound Stories: Medical Matters Beethoven died 12.00pm Composer of the Week: Strauss 1.00pm The Radio 3 Lunchtime Concert The Munich-based Rosamunde Quartet make their British concert debut, Webern (Langsamere Satz), Mozart (String Quartet in F, K 481), Shostakovich (String Quartet No 8, Op 110) 2.00pm The BBC Orchestra BBC National Orchestra of Wales under Sir Mark Wigglesworth, Barry Douglas, piano, Tippett (The Rose Tree), Rachmaninov (Piano Concerto No 3 in D minor), Brahms (Symphony No 4 in E minor) 4.00pm Ensemble Play in Piano and Voice, featuring extraordinary achievements of Haydn (f) 4.45pm Music Machine with Tommy Pearson 5.00pm In Tune Sean Rafferty explores the new production of Britten's *Mephistopheles* as it opens at English National Opera 7.30pm Performance on 3 Edward Downes conducts Verdi's *Requiem* dramatic and powerful setting of the Mass for Dead in a concert given last July at Symphony Hall, Birmingham. Nival Raulo, soprano, Sally Burgess, mezzo, Dennis O'Neill, tenor, John Tomlinson, bass, Mendelssohn Choir of Wales under Edward Downes. See Choice 9.00pm Postscript: The Pass de Deux (45) 9.20pm Haydn and Beethoven Boris Berman, piano, Bartok (Six Dances in Bulgarian Rhythm, Mikrokosmos, Book 6), Haydn (Sonata in E flat, H 152) 10.00pm Music Responder Luke Sheppard introduces a programme of country delights, including a pastoral cantata by Hesse performed by Emma Kirkby, soprano, and London Baroque 10.45pm Night Waves With a new collection of essays published this week in Britain, Alberto Manguel talks to Paul Allen about the nature of books and the place of literature in contemporary culture 11.30pm Jazz Notes with Allyn Shapiro 12.00pm Composer of the Week: Debussy (f) 1.00am Through the Night With Donald Macleod, 1.00am Sinfonia Varsovia under Jan Krenz, Krenz (Classical Variations), Brahms (Symphony No 4 in E minor), 2.15pm Concerto in D minor, Liszt (Mozart Polyzwinski (clarinet), Grzegorz Goleb (cello), New Warsaw Trio, 3.00pm Schools Music Workshop 3.20pm Let's Move! 3.40pm Words Alive 3.55pm First Steps in Drama 4.10pm Listen and the 4.35pm Radio Showcase 4.40pm Check It Out 5.00pm Wolf (Italian Serenade) 5.15pm Chopin (Scherzo No 2 in B flat minor, Op 51) 5.30pm Schubert (Symphony No 5 in B flat)

RADIO 4

5.30am World News 5.35pm Shipping Forecast 5.40pm Inshore Forecast 5.45pm Prayer for the Day 5.47pm Farming Today Rural news with Charlotte Smith 6.00pm Today with John Humphrys and Sue MacGregor 6.30pm (LW) Yesterday in Parliament Political Update 9.00pm Malvern Bragg: In Our Time Guests join Malvern Bragg to consider ideas and events which have influenced the present age 9.30pm Q & A Jez Nelson investigates the effect of neuroscience on perceptions of the human spirit 9.45pm (FM) Serials: Letters From My Windmill (45) 9.55pm Daily Service Director of music Alan Wilson 10.00pm Woman's Hour Jenni Murray presents 11.00pm Crossing Continents Isabel Hilton investigates the alarming rise in domestic violence and sexual abuse in Nicaragua, asking what has gone wrong since the Sandinista revolution 11.30pm My Uncle Freddie by Alex Fergusson, Comedy: sat in Tyneside's charming relationship between a youngster and his uncle, With Shaun Prendergast and Gareth Brown (1/8) (f) 12.00pm (FM) News Headlines: Shipping Forecast 12.05pm (FM) Daily Service Director of music Alan Wilson 1.00pm The World at One with Nick Clarke 1.30pm Open Country Richard Uridge presents from 2.00pm The Archers Yesterday's edition (f) 2.15pm Afternoon Play: East Coast Line (Southbound) More travellers' tales from Lesley Glaister 3.00pm Tell You and Yours 0870 019444 Consumer justice programme, presented by Peter White 3.28pm Radio 4 Appeal Robin Day speaks on behalf of the Epilepsy Research Foundation (f) 3.30pm Carnival Tales Mark Richards investigates the carnival in the Amazonian city of Belém 3.45pm This Sacred Vale Anne Massie narrates part 54 of the history of Britain (f)

4.00pm News Work Alison Mitchell investigates the changing world of work 4.30pm The Material World Trevor Phillips asks whether scientists should be held personally responsible for their discoveries 5.00pm PM with Chris Lowe and Nigel Wrench 6.00pm Six O'Clock News 6.30pm Dear John Tribute to the satirist John Wells, author of Private Eye's "Dear Bob" letters (f) 7.00pm The Archers Ruth turns it up 7.15pm Front Row The night arts programme 7.45pm The Cry of the Willam Part 24 of Tim Jackson's environmental drama. Broadcast earlier as part of Woman's Hour (f) 8.00pm What If? Professor Christopher Andrew and guests imagine alternative events that could have transpired had King Alfred been defeated by the Vikings at Edington in 878 (2/4) 8.30pm The Week in Westminster Steve Richards takes a look behind the political scenes 9.00pm Leading Edge Geoff Watts reports on events at the cutting edge of science 9.30pm Malvern Bragg: In Our Time Broadcast earlier (f) 10.00pm The World Tonight Presented by Robin Lustig 10.45pm Book at Bedtime: Strutt is the Gate Dancer McKail reads the story by André Gide (4/10) 11.00pm Late Night on 4: The Way It Is Satire and sketches with Simon Evans, Tracy-Anne Oberman and Dave Lamb 11.30pm (FM) A Good Read Thomas Sutcliffe discusses three favourite paperbacks with guests Martin Seix and Neil Jordan 11.30pm (LW) Today in Parliament Update from Westminster 12.00pm News 12.30pm The Late Book: The Mask of Command Part four of John Keegan's account of the nature of leadership 12.48pm Shipping Forecast 1.00am As World Service

FREQUENCY GUIDE, RADIO 1, FM 97.6-99.2, RADIO 2, FM 62.0-92.4, RADIO 3, FM 90.2-92.4, RADIO 4, FM 92.4-94.4, LW 195, MW 720, RADIO 5 LIVE, MW 655, 705, WORLD SERVICE, MW 645, LW 195 (12.45-6.55am), CLASSIC FM, FM 100-102, VIRGIN RADIO, FM 105.5, MW 1197, 1215, TALK RADIO, MW 1059, 1069. Television and radio listings compiled by Perry Cleveland-Peck, Ian Hughes, Gillian Maczey, Jane Gregory and Barry O'Keefe

Choose a film for the way you feel tonight.

Flubber

Amistad

The Butcher Boy

Mortal Kombat: Annihilation

Boogie Nights

The Accused

Romeo & Juliet

The Rock

Evita

When Harry Met Sally

Asunder

Die Hard 2: Die Harder

My Fellow Americans

Brubaker

Like Water For Chocolate

skydigital TV as you want it.

هكذا من الذم

Us and them in the gardens of discontent

Even Herbert Beerbohm Tree — who once chided a too-quietly actress in an Egyptian drama. Remember you in Kensington? — might have winced at the mischievous way Vivienne Howard, in *Diana's Neighbours* (BBC2), portrayed every resident of Kensington as a rich, braying toff who can't open their mouth without a plum plopping out of it.

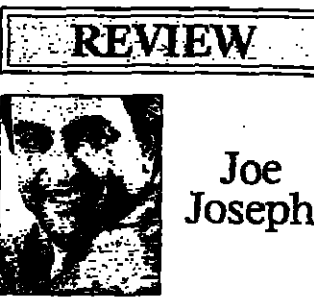
Did Howard decide to make this film about the proposed (and now shelved) £10 million Diana Memorial Garden in Kensington Gardens only after having found Mrs Ethne Rudd, secretary of the Kensington Society? Or was it just serendipity that, having planned to make the documentary anyway, she chanced upon a character who could serve as the perfect fulcrum for the telling of this seamy tale? There's no getting around it: Mrs Rudd is straight out of Central

Casting (here is Mrs Rudd inspecting flowers placed on Kensington Palace's railings on the anniversary of Diana's death: "A huge sunflower. How lovely! I wonder what that's meant to signify: we can all grow tall if we try"). If you wanted to create one of those public service broadcasts to show the world that Britain is still an *Us* and *Them* society, then you could need to look no further than Howard's film.

By distorting and then exaggerating a stereotype, this documentary arouses the same emotions as a funny ethnic joke: you know you shouldn't laugh, but you can't help yourself. Howard's film is totally outrageous but hugely enjoyable. You have to peek at it through pained fingers. It's outrageous because Kensington Gardens are actually busy with bodies of every class, colour, race and religion; they're playing soccer, riding bicycles, sunbathing, skating, playing softball, reading, snogging, talking, play-

ing guitars, sleeping, walking dogs, collecting conkers, playing with their children, or just getting some fresh air. But Howard, luckily, found none of these people.

I instead she found Mrs Rudd. And her friend Brian Sewell, the art critic, who has turned enunciating vowels into a cruel blood sport: "Kensington Gardens are part of my life. In my childhood, during the war, there were sheep grazing here. I learnt the facts of life in these gardens because as one trundled around during the war, the place was full of soldiers and young women who were doing it here instead of shop windows. Kensington Gardens means a great deal to me. It's an integral part of my life and I don't want some nincompoop appointed by the Chancellor — who is not a Londoner, but another bloody Scotsman throwing his weight about town here — changing it."



Joe Joseph

Remarkably, after hearing this diatribe, there wasn't a spontaneous, spiteful decision to turn Kensington Gardens into a giant amusement arcade with 24-hour-a-day bumper cars and hot-dog stalls every five yards: instead Gordon Brown and his Diana Memorial Committee agreed to abandon the 27-acre garden in favour of sprucing up the park's already existing children's play-

ground. Actually, this was probably the correct decision. A formal garden just in front of the palace gates would have made Kensington Gardens far stiffer than you might think it already is after seeing Diana's Neighbours, and the traffic is thick enough down Kensington High Street without coach parties adding to the chaos.

But in these arguments still lacking enough punch, Sewell was on hand — like the bruiser who's just given someone a thrashing and is hovering threateningly with his baseball bat, just in case his victim has any thoughts of getting up off the floor — to seal the case for the prosecution. "It seems to me an appalling thought," he said, his nostrils flaring like a stallion's, "that the man who saw to the washing of the Princess's knickers should now dictate to the rest of the nation that the garden should be so abused." You assume the "man" he was referring to was

Paul Burrell, Diana's butler — then still on the Memorial Committee. Unhappily, well meant Gordon Brown. You may sport, but you can't put anything past that Brian.

I'll bet if Brian Sewell had been overseeing the restoration work on Home House, a dilapidated 18th-century Robert Adam palace just behind Selfridges that has just been turned into a lush private members' club, the builders would have got the plastering and painting finished in time for the opening night party. Either that or they would have killed him.

Probably killed him. So it's lucky that the man the builders had to deal with was actually the genial former restaurant manager Brian Clivaz, although maybe not lucky for Brian Clivaz. In *Trouble At The Top: Restoration Comedy* (BBC2) — a sort of grander *Changing Rooms*, only without Carol Smilie grinning at

us like a toothpaste commercial — Clivaz showed remarkable good humour in adversity. Missed deadlines, floods, no kitchen, no bar, no heating, no takings to show his investors: although Clivaz, caught between builders and backers, confessed that occasionally he "plunged into the depths of despair", he mostly maintained a perkiness that must be the result of an irrepressibly optimistic disposition; if not that, then of amphetamine.

Clivaz was finding that being screwed from both ends was painful at about the same time that Carrie and her chic Manhattan friends in *Sex and the City* (Channel 4) were wondering if threesomes were the most fun you could have in bed. They discovered what most of us have known for a while: that sex between two people can be a beautiful experience; providing, of course, you get between the right two people.

REVIEW



Joe Joseph

Remarkably, after hearing this diatribe, there wasn't a spontaneous, spiteful decision to turn Kensington Gardens into a giant amusement arcade with 24-hour-a-day bumper cars and hot-dog stalls every five yards: instead Gordon Brown and his Diana Memorial Committee agreed to abandon the 27-acre garden in favour of sprucing up the park's already existing children's play-

- BBC1**
- 6.00am Business Breakfast (32760)
 - 7.00am BBC Breakfast News (17460)
 - 9.00am News (242063)
 - 9.45am Wipeout (369168)
 - 10.10am The Vanessa Show (1718302)
 - 10.55am News: Weather (1737989)
 - 11.00am Change That (369168)
 - 11.25am Can't Cook, Won't Cook (1737989)
 - 11.55am News: Weather (1737989)
 - 12.00pm Call My Bluff (56128)
 - 12.30pm Top Tip Challenge (1440321)
 - 12.55pm The Weather Show (1737989)
 - 1.00pm One O'Clock News (1737989)
 - 1.30pm Regional News: Weather (1737989)
 - 1.40pm Neighbours Karl prepares for his career change (1737989)
 - 2.05pm Inside (1737989)
 - 2.55pm Through the Keyhole (1737989)
 - 3.25pm Children's BBC: Playdays (32760)
 - 3.45pm Pocky Dragon Adventures (5628147)
 - 4.10pm The All New Poppy Show (5628147)
 - 4.35pm Home Farm Twins (5628147)
 - 5.00pm News: Weather (1737989)
 - 5.30pm News: Weather (1737989)
 - 5.53pm Rewind (1737989)
 - 5.55pm Neighbours Karl (1737989)
 - 6.00pm Six O'Clock News: Weather (1737989)
 - 6.30pm Regional News: Weather (1737989)
 - 7.00pm Watchdog with Anne Robinson: Consumer investigation show, putting some of the biggest names in the high street under the spotlight (1737989)
 - 7.30pm EastEnders Frank confides in Roy (1737989)
 - 8.00pm Harbour Lights: A leisure development is threatened by pollution and Steve Blade suspects his brother may have something to do with it (1737989)
 - 8.50pm Points of View: Viewers' opinions on recent programmes (1737989)
 - 9.00pm Nine O'Clock News: Regional News: Weather (1737989)
 - 9.30pm Playhouse (1737989)
 - 10.20pm They Think It's All Over Again: Sports quiz (1737989)
 - 10.50pm Question Time with Oona King and Lord Norman Tebbit (1737989)

- BBC2**
- 7.00am Children's BBC: Breakfast News (17460)
 - 7.05am Teletubbies (730130)
 - 7.30am Blue Peter (620) Taz-Mania (640) Fokke Dot Shorts (850) Wishing (900) Wishing Up (910) Job Bank (920) Job Bank (930) Watch (940) Come Outside (950) Teletubbies (1030) Storytime (1045) The Experiment (1130) Space Ark (1135) Zg Zag (1135) Pathways of Belief (1135) About Music (1210pm) English File (1230) Working Lunch (100) Wishing
 - 1.10pm War Walks: The history of British and Irish warfare (1737989)
 - 1.40pm Hart-Davis on History: The reputation of Richard III (3537147)
 - 2.10pm Awash with Colour (5639729)
 - 2.40pm News: Weather (1737989)
 - 2.45pm Westminster (1737989)
 - 3.25pm News: Weather (1737989)
 - 3.30pm The Village (1737989)
 - 3.55pm Keys Advice show (5628147)
 - 4.25pm Ready, Steady, Cook (1737989)
 - 4.55pm Esther Caribay (1737989)
 - 5.30pm Whose House? (878)
 - 6.00pm Star Trek: Deep Space Nine: Dex is kidnapped and accused of committing murder (1737989)
 - 6.45pm Quantum Leap: Sam becomes an English professor (1737989)
 - 7.30pm [REDACTED] Making It: New documentary series set in the competitive world of design (1737989)
 - 8.00pm Fred Dibnah's Industrial Age: The nation's favourite steepclimber charts the development of the railways (1737989)

- HTV**
- 5.30am ITV Morning News (78050)
 - 6.00am GMTV (563421)
 - 9.25pm This Morning (1737989)
 - 10.30pm This Morning (1737989)
 - 12.15pm ITV Lunchtime News (405788)
 - 12.30pm ITV Lunchtime News (405788)
 - 1.30pm Home and Away: Vince convinces himself that he has psychic powers (1737989)
 - 1.55pm The Jerry Springer Show: Outrageous American talk show (1737989)
 - 2.40pm Wheel of Fortune (1737989)
 - 3.10pm ITV News: Weather (1737989)
 - 3.15pm ITV News: Weather (1737989)
 - 3.20pm MTV: Mopop's Shop (4080147)
 - 3.30pm The Sylvester and Tweety Mysteries (5014944)
 - 3.50pm Lavender Castle (5644878)
 - 4.05pm Hey Arnold! (5005418)
 - 4.30pm Children's World (550)
 - 5.00pm Home and Away (1737989)
 - 5.30pm WEST: Pleasure Guide Magazine: covering the region's entertainment, from theatre and arts to films and videos. Presented by Dave Mason and Vanessa Bowley (483234)
 - 5.30pm WALES: Crazy Creatures: The National Canine Defence League (1737989)
 - 5.55pm HTV Crime: The 173588
 - 6.00pm HTV News (1737989)
 - 6.30pm HTV Evening News: Weather (1737989)
 - 7.00pm Eminent: Andy's fate is decided (1737989)
 - 7.30pm WEST: We Can Work It Out: Judy Finnigan and the team investigate how the roof fell in a wedding anniversary holiday (808)
 - 7.50pm WALES: Wales This Week: Current affairs (808)
 - 8.00pm The Bill: There's a general air of relief at Sun Hill now that Quinlan's on the mend — but Garfield continues to blame Boulton for the incident (1737989)
 - 9.00pm [REDACTED] Every Woman Knows a Secret: Starring Sebastian Redmond (1737989)
 - 10.00pm WEST: The Truth About Men: Celebrities including Alan Davies, Shane Richie, Les Dennis, Clive Sinclair, Sean Hughes and Michael Winner divulge their innermost thoughts (1737989)
 - 10.00pm WALES: In the Company of Strangers: New series, Murder mystery, starring Robert Pugh (1737989)
 - 11.00pm ITV Night News: Weather (1737989)
 - 11.20pm HTV News: Weather (1737989)
 - 11.30pm WEST: A Trip in the Cosmic Buggy: Weston-super-Mare's pub and club scene (808)
 - 11.30pm WALES: We Can Work It Out (808)
 - 12.00pm WEST: Public Morale: Coroner's boyfriend is arrested (1737989)
 - 12.00pm WALES: Tales from the Darkside: All a Clone by the Telephone, starring Harry Anderson (20053)
 - 12.30pm The Jerry Springer Show (7355088)
 - 1.15pm Teletubbies (730130)
 - 1.40pm News: Weather (1737989)
 - 2.10pm Pop Down the Pub (9141587)
 - 2.40pm BBC America: Top 10 US movie releases (953887)
 - 3.10pm Cybernet Computer news (4711209)
 - 3.40pm Murder, She Wrote: A department store discounts its wares as it's about to be sold to a museum (80753)
 - 4.30pm Coach: Doris tries to get the team to move (4838513)
 - 4.55pm ITV Night News: Behind the scenes of ITV programmes (3209161)

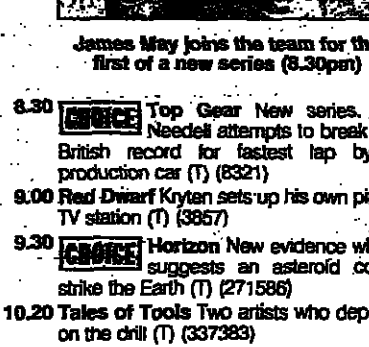
- CENTRAL**
- As HTV West except:
 - 12.20pm Central News (7164654)
 - 12.55pm Home and Away (413708)
 - 1.25pm The Jerry Springer Show (4078302)
 - 2.10pm Echo Point (5637050)
 - 3.15pm Central News: Weather (4668654)
 - 3.30pm Shortland Street (300)
 - 3.50pm Central News at Six (215)
 - 11.20pm Central News: Weather (782741)
 - 11.30pm-12.30pm Wonderful You (10078)
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 - 5.20pm-5.30pm Asian Eye (321838)
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- 12.15pm-12.27pm Westcountry News: Weather (4926588)
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 - 12.55pm-1.25pm Westcountry News: Weather (4926588)
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 - 4.55pm-5.00pm Birthday People (7775505)
 - 5.30pm Dig It With Den (302)
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- CHANNEL 4**
- 5.55am Sesame Street (4158418)
 - 7.00am The Big Breakfast (27505)
 - 9.00am Schools: History in Action (1737989)
 - 9.20am Geographical Eye: Over Asia (1737989)
 - 9.40am Place and People (1737989)
 - 10.00am Middle English (1737989)
 - 10.20am Fourways Farm (1737989)
 - 10.40am Scientific Eye (1737989)
 - 10.55pm What the Papers Said (1737989)
 - 11.00pm The Number Crew (1737989)
 - 11.10pm Pitch Fever (3140128)
 - 11.30pm Powerhouse (6418)
 - 12.00pm Sesame Street (1737989)
 - 12.30pm Bawltched (1737989)
 - 1.00pm The Afternoon Line: Racing tips (20892)
 - 1.30pm The Cheltenham Festival: Brough Scott introduces live action on Gold Cup day, comprising the 2.00pm Elitist Racing Club (Triumph Hurdle, 2.35pm Bonaparte Stayers' Hurdle, 3.15pm Cheltenham Gold Cup Chase and the 3.55pm Christie's Foxhunter Chase Challenge (741857)
 - 4.30pm Countdown (1737989)
 - 4.55pm Ricki Lake (1737989)
 - 5.30pm Pet Rescue (1737989)
 - 6.00pm Friends: Ross makes the big mistake of letting Rachel in on his most secret sexual fantasy (1737989)
 - 6.30pm Hollyoaks: Tony decides to make more of an effort (1737989)
 - 7.00pm Channel 4 News: Weather (1737989)
 - 7.55pm Bodyscopes (803857)
 - 8.00pm Gold Cup Day at Cheltenham: Highlights of the prestigious event (1654)
 - 8.30pm Wild Tales: The continuing survival of crocodiles and alligators (1737989)
 - 9.00pm Ramsey's Boiling Point: Gordon Ramsey prepares a banquet for 650 people at the Palace of Versailles on the eve of the World Cup (45) (1737989)
 - 9.30pm Dispatches: A report revealing shocking allegations that the police have manipulated crime figures (1737989)

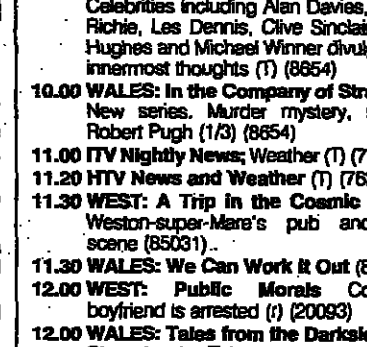
- CHANNEL 5**
- 6.00am 5 News and Sport: Headline round-up (8753188)
 - 7.00pm WideWorld Part 20: The benefits of sport and exercise (1737989)
 - 7.30pm Wildlife (2880505)
 - 7.55pm Wildlife (2880505)
 - 8.00pm Hallelujah! (1737989)
 - 8.30pm Dappledawn Farm (1737989)
 - 9.00pm Holiday Park: The day of Jane's party arrives but the whole event is threatened by an unwelcome visitor (1737989)
 - 9.30pm The Oprah Winfrey Show (1737989)
 - 10.20pm Sunset Beach: Francesca plots against Cole and Caitlin (1737989)
 - 11.10pm Lassa (5319447)
 - 12.00pm 5 News at Noon (1737989)
 - 12.30pm Family Affairs: Pete plans to get his own back on Dave (1737989)
 - 1.00pm The Bold and the Beautiful: Clarke reveals all to Sally (1737989)
 - 1.30pm The Roseanne Show: Outrageous chat with the outspoken comedian (1737989)
 - 2.00pm 100 Per Cent Gold (9841166)
 - 2.30pm Good Afternoon: An hour of leisure, lifestyle and documentary, featuring real-life soap Liverpool Mates, Rob Butler's world game Cryptogram and Selling the Family Silver, 5 News Update (1449564)
 - 3.30pm The Pursuit of DB Cooper (TVM 1981): Fact-based thriller, starring Terence Williams as the crook who held a plane to ransom and escaped by parachute with more than \$200,000. Robert Duvall co-stars. Directed by Roger Spotswood (8655147)
 - 5.25pm 5 News (1737989)
 - 5.30pm 100 Per Cent Gold (9841166)
 - 6.00pm 5 News: Weather (1737989)
 - 6.30pm Family Affairs: Dave tries to get the better of Pete (1737989)
 - 7.00pm European Cup Winners' Cup: Valencia v Chelsea (kick-off 7.30pm). Full coverage of the Cup Winners' Cup quarter-final second-leg in Oslo. Subsequent programmes subject to change (1737989)
 - 9.35pm Magnum Force (1973): Clint Eastwood, reprising his role as the maverick San Francisco police inspector "Dirty" Harry Callahan, upsets his superiors once more by setting out to hunt down a vigilante group responsible for cold-bloodedly murdering the city's most wanted criminals. Action thriller, co-starring Hal Holbrook, David Soul, Mitchell Ryan and Robert Urich. Directed by Ted Post (1737989)
 - 11.45pm Red Shoe Diaries: A man tries to save his doomed marriage (5659741)
 - 12.20am The Pepsi Chart: We Steps performing their latest single, Better Be Forgotten (9738364)
 - 12.50pm The Jack Docherty Show: With Kaye Wragg (862567)
 - 1.30pm Live and Dangerous: The all-night sports magazine featuring Dutch and Argentine football (6759074)
 - 4.40pm Prisoners: Carl Black II vows to take revenge on Matt (787890)
 - 5.30pm 100 Per Cent Gold (9841166)



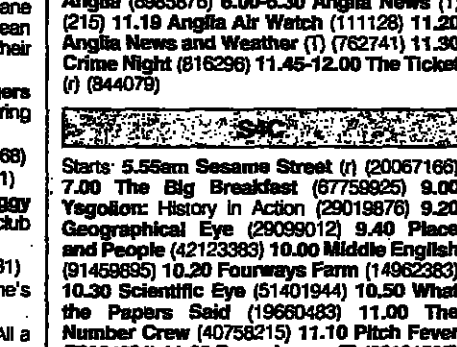
There's romance for Robert De Niro and Meryl Streep (11.55pm)



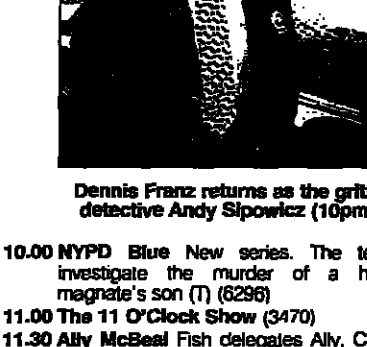
James May joins the team for the first of a new series (8.30pm)



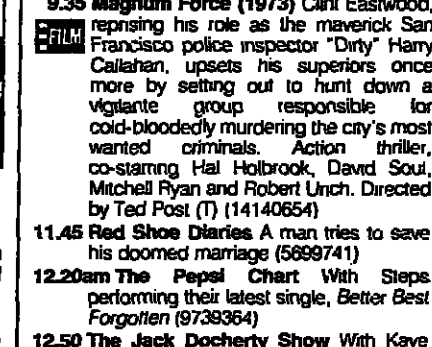
Dennis Franz returns as the gritty detective Andy Sipowicz (10pm)



Dennis Franz returns as the gritty detective Andy Sipowicz (10pm)



Dennis Franz returns as the gritty detective Andy Sipowicz (10pm)



Dennis Franz returns as the gritty detective Andy Sipowicz (10pm)

- Wales**
- 11.55pm Falling in Love (1994): Romantic drama, starring Robert De Niro and Meryl Streep, as commuters who meet on a train and are tempted to start an affair — despite both being married. Directed by Ulu Grosbard (1737989)
 - 1.35am News (1737989)
 - 1.40pm News (1737989)
 - 10.30pm What's in It for Me? (563021): 11.20pm Question Time (1737989)
 - 11.30pm News (1737989)
 - 11.35pm News (1737989)
 - 11.40pm News (1737989)
 - 11.45pm News (1737989)
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ATHLETICS 48

Radcliffe returns to Balmoral in defence of her five-mile title

SPORT

THURSDAY MARCH 18 1999

RUGBY UNION 51

Villepreux tries to make light of clash against England



Viali warms to Valerenga task

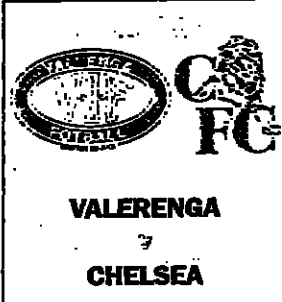
Chelsea seek more than cold comfort

FROM KEVIN MCCARRA IN OSLO

IT IS a peculiar kind of winter break that sees men seeking out cold instead of chasing the sun. Nonetheless, as they landed in Oslo, there was satisfaction for Chelsea in the sight of the banks of snow that had been cleared from the runways. This is a club in need of a change of scene after the defeat by Manchester United in the FA Cup and West Ham United in the FA Carling Premiership.

The trip to a bracingly chilly Oslo could be refreshing in itself, but Chelsea will be glad, above all, of another spell in the lenient land of the Cup Winners' Cup. After a 3-0 win for Gianluca Viali's team in the first leg at Stamford Bridge, the tie with Valerenga is already over. The holders will face their first severe test in the semi-finals, in which, in all probability, they will meet Lazio, Lokomotiv Moscow or Real Mallorca.

Only the margin of victory over Valerenga remains to be debated and Viali, the player-manager, addressed more far-reaching concerns yesterday. He is heartened by the emphatic form shown by Graeme Le Saux since apparent provoca-



tion by Robbie Fowler led him to appear to strike the Liverpool forward three weeks ago. "When the pressure is on you can get down about it or you can get a boost from the fact that everyone is looking at you, as Graeme has done," Viali said.

Le Saux and Fowler should be named today in the England squad for the match against Poland, but a date for the FA hearing on their misconduct charges is still to be set. "The longer it takes, the better," Viali said, "because in two or three weeks no one will remember it." He trusts, in particular, that his left back can master the art of forgetting.

"I hope that Graeme doesn't think in the future that it would be better for him to move abroad," Viali said. "I hope he sticks with English football and doesn't get fed up with the situation around him." Another step towards retaining the Cup Winners' Cup should remind Le Saux of the advantages of staying precisely where he is.

Decisions about this trip laid bare Viali's attitude to it. Marcel Desailly and Frank Leboeuf, the centre backs, were not in the party, but Viali could hardly pretend that the pair were gravely injured when they are virtually certain to be in action at the weekend. "If this had been the final they would both be with us," he said. "We have an important match at Aston Villa on Sunday and I did not want to risk them."

The weather is far less hostile than that encountered by Chelsea in Tromsø last season, but these are still not the conditions for men such as Desailly and Leboeuf to expose their aches and pains, even if underoil heating at the Ullevaal Stadium will give the players a sure surface.

With the Norwegian season yet to begin, Valerenga remain at a disadvantage despite being managed by Egil Olsen, whose method of direct play is dreaded even more than it is

Ginola on target.....50
Venables owed £2m.....50
Ardéico halt Italians.....50

denounced, John Carew, the powerful centre forward, is the prime threat.

Chelsea, for their own sake, wish to excel. Over the past week, with the departure from the FA Cup and the harm done to their prospects of winning the Premiership, a little hope has seeped out of them. "We need a bit more determination in both boxes, when we have the chance to score and when we are having to defend to get a result," Viali said.

It is the claiming of goals that is the greater problem. Since the victory over Valerenga a fortnight ago, Chelsea have not scored in three matches. They are more dependent than they would wish on Tore Andre Flo, who has not scored since December 26. Injury has taken up much of the intervening period and, after a comeback at the end of last month, sharpness has been just out of reach.

Flo, with the distraction of imminent fatherhood at the end of this month, may be left out this evening as Viali presses himself into service. The match itself should be a jolt before the season enters that phase in which high promise teeters on the edge of failure.

Chelsea (possible 4-2-2) E. De Gooij - A. Fener, M. Duberry, B. Lambourde, G. Le Saux - D. Petersen, J. Morris, D. Wicks, C. Saborido - G. Wain, G. Zola

Valerenga (possible 4-5-1) M. Kaven - T. Børstein, K. Hørskov, F. Njor, H. Torg - K. Kvikstad, J. Wain, B. Einarsson, D. Rønne, T. Hov - J. Carew

Referee: A. Amundsen (Belgium)

TELEVISION: Channel 5, from 7pm.



Looks Like Trouble, ridden by Paul Carberry, clears the last fence in copybook style before galloping away up the hill to win the Royal & Sun Alliance Chase by a distance on another day of glorious sunshine at Cheltenham. Photograph: Julian Herbert/Allsport

McCoy banned again

TONY McCoy, the champion National Hunt jockey, who rides Unsinkable Boxer in the Tote Gold Cup today, was banned for four days by the Cheltenham stewards yesterday for incorrect use of the whip as he drove Majadour to a 16-length victory in the Mildmay of Flete Challenge Cup.

McCoy, who had picked up a two-day suspension for misuse of the whip at Taunton on Monday, will be out of action on all racing days from March 24-30. He was referred to the Jockey Club last November when the disciplinary committee imposed an 18-day ban, of which four were deferred. In January, he was again found in breach of whip rules, bringing the deferred part of the suspension into effect.

McCoy has now topped up a further eight days of bans since his last appearance before the disciplinary committee.

By ALAN LEE
RACING CORRESPONDENT

tee and this will trigger a second trip to Portman Square.

Richard Dunwoody is always longed to ride another horse to lift spirits and rule dreams in his native Ireland. He seeks it as a fitting climax to a majestic career and today, aged 35 and with a right arm that refuses to heal, he has his chance.

If Florida Pearl justifies the floods of Irish money that have established him as 2-1 favourite for a compelling Gold Cup, Dunwoody will be defied in his homeland. For that to happen, though, horse and jockey must overcome the most competitive field in years.

Dunwoody, who still needs daily physiotherapy, speaks passionately of the Irish lust for equine heroes and he

knows Florida Pearl has the credentials for the role. But in a race that has captured public imagination like no Gold Cup since Desert Orchid won, ten years ago, there are many alternative winners.

Rob Hartnett, spokesman for the Tote, calls it "the most eagerly awaited race in years" and reports that his firm alone has already taken more than £400,000 in ante-post bets. The horse that would be the Tote's biggest loser is the hope of Herefordshire, Teeton Mill. There is also at least one more potential Irish winner, Doran's Pride, third in the last two runnings, Imperial Call, winner in 1996, and last year's hero, Cool Dawn, have both been withdrawn as has Earth Summit, winner of the Grand National last April.

Gold Cup preview, page 52
Simon Barnes, page 53

MORSE

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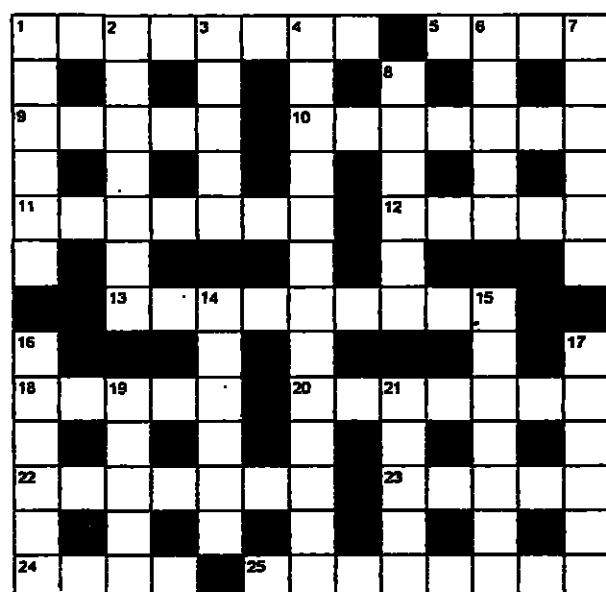
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Sun

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD



No 1668

ACROSS

- 1 Manner of speaking (8)
- 5 Light (eg hair); fine (weather) (4)
- 9 Tall (5)
- 10 Heavy (eg responsibility) (7)
- 11 Frame (of car) (7)
- 12 Given nothing to eat (5)
- 13 Non-indulgent promotion of welfare (5,4)
- 18 Longest Iberian river (5)
- 20 Harvesting the sea (7)
- 22 Condition (attached) (7)
- 23 Thick-skinned beast (5)
- 24 Twilight (4)
- 25 Belief; side (table) (8)

DOWN

- 1 Principle of action; insurance document (6)
- 2 Bend (light-ray) (7)
- 3 Bottomless pit (5)
- 4 (M/P) change sides (5,3,5)
- 6 Cold and distant (5)
- 7 Dwell (6)
- 8 Gas-cooker setting scale (6)
- 14 (Remark) kept to oneself (6)
- 15 Omission of vowel (7)
- 16 Unintelligent (6)
- 17 Pay no attention to (6)
- 19 Sheen; comment in margin (5)
- 21 A scrap: cut into tiny bits (5)

SOLUTION TO NO 1667

- ACROSS: 1 Verbal 4 Bleed 8 Sound 9 Penguin 10 Broche 11 Delf 12 Dew 14 Extent 15 Ogled 18 Ego 20 Junk 22 Asks out 24 Martin 25 Down 26 Style 27 Gyrate
DOWN: 1 Visible 2 Routine 3 Abdicat 4 Band 5 Elude 6 Dingy 7 Speed 13 Workaday 16 Leonora 17 Detenit 19 Oakum 20 James 21 Nervi 23 Cite

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